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GOD-MAN:

BY

L. T. TOWNSEND, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY,
BOSTON UNIVERSITY.

SEARCH AND MANIFESTATION.

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And who is sufficient for these things?

2 Cor. ii. 16.

If I have said anything unworthy of Thee, or have aspired for my own honor, mercifully forgive me.

Kepler.

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PREFACE.

DURING the fall of 1869, application, unsought and undesired, was made to the author to discuss in Music Hall, Boston, the problem of Ecce Deus — Ecce Homo. Various considerations led to compliance with the request. The arguments advanced in support of Christ's deity were desired for publication; consent was given, but time asked for review and revision. The delay seems, doubtless, unreasonably prolonged. But the subject, upon investigation, has been constantly enlarging its boundaries, and has also been found to suggest so many critical and important issues, that delay has been unavoidable; and more than once the disparity between the ever-expanding ideal and the work actually accomplished has been so startling, — never more so than when closing the last chapter, — that but for the publisher's announcement, and a strange, almost fascinating conviction, the pen

had long since been laid aside, or otherwise employed.

We hope the apparent presumption of adding another treatise to the many admirable ones upon the subject, already before the public, will be pardoned in view of another consideration. The theme is so great and grand, falling from all lips, engaging all pens, and involving questions and problems of philosophy and life so varied that whoever writes upon it may be pardoned for hoping that his added mite will receive perusal before dismissal from at least some of the many friends of Jesus; and thus the faith of a few be strengthened and the cause of truth subserved.

The original divisions of the argument have not been modified, except in scope and fulness. The facts and reasoning as presented in this volume are classified under Search and Manifestion. The Strife and Harmony, involving discussions respecting the attitude of modern science, philosophy, sceptical criticism, and Christianity towards Jesus will constitute the matter of a second work, now nearly ready.

Some of the views advanced will, very likely, be condemned as heterodox, or at least as concessions to liberalism. We do not think they are; at all events, we believe them, and so submit them, if erroneous, to the decision and condemnation of the devout heart — that sworn Detective of every form of human error.

If we are correct, there is nothing to fear; for truth never asks for silence, and if stated, will take good care of itself, though often playing sad havoc with our own preconceived and fond notions.

The quotations may be thought over-copious: to those who can examine extensively all the literature of the subject, they are so, but not to the masses whom the author desires to reach, and who are anxiously inquiring respecting the various topics discussed, though they have neither time nor means to make extensive personal investigation; besides, the best part of all modern books is their quotations.

It is possible we should have limited somewhat our discussions in the field of Comparative Theology, had we anticipated the publication of several foreign works upon this subject, together with Dr. Clarke's "Ten Great Religions" and Professor Moffat's "Comparative History of Religions" in our own country, which have been issued since our investigations were commenced.

The labor attending the following pages, not light, though it may appear thus to the reader, and though prosecuted under the pressure of other incessant occupations, in pulpit and lecture-room, has been attended, on the whole, with that keenness of pleasure which the Believer always experiences when engaged about his Master's business.

The chief regret, so overshadowing that it may be regarded the only one felt as the book goes from the press, is, that it so imperfectly and unworthily represents the Divine One.

The sentiment touchingly expressed by Justin Martyr finds in us the deepest response: "I would fain, O Divine Son of Mary, feeble as I am, have said something great of Thee."

CONTENTS.

I. SEARCH.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY. 15

COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY. 19

I. THE BRAHMIN. 21
II. THE BUDDHIST. 30
III. THE GREEK AND ROMAN 41
IV. THE ISRAELITE AND ISHMAELITE. 59
V. THE ABORIGINAL AMERICAN. 75

ESSENTIAL THEOLOGY. 83

I. GOD-IDEA. 85
II. MEDIATOR. 94
III. INCARNATION. 108
IV. SACRIFICE. 112
V. AUTHORITY OF ESSENTIAL THEOLOGY. 121
VI. ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ESSENTIAL THEOLOGY. 139

II. MANIFESTATION.

INTRODUCTORY. 161

I. NEW ERA. 162
II. RECORDS. 175
III. HUMANITY OF JESUS; FACTS AND OPINIONS. 190

IV. DIVINITY OF JESUS. 197

I. Recorded Facts. 197
II. Apostolic Opinions. 222
III. Contemporaneous Public Opinion. 241
IV. Personal Testimony. 252
V. Early Christian Opinion. 265
VI. Modern Opinions and Estimates. 288
VII. Christian Consciousness. 322
VIII. Christianity. 355

EPILOGUE. 389

APPENDICES.

A. Monotheism, the Background of Greek and Roman Polytheism. 411
B. Oriental Religions originally from the same Soil. 411
C. Mind of Jesus not influenced by Philo's Teachings. 412
D. Devotions of the Mohammedans. 413
E. Prescott's Account of Mexican Sacrifices. 413
F. Devotions of Chinese, Brahmins, and Buddhists. . 415
G. Current Opinions authoritative; View of Spencer. 416
H. Condition of Rome at the Advent of Christianity. 418
I. Translation of Virgil's Eclogue. 419
J. Incidental Evidences of Gospel Credibility. . . . 421
K. The remarkable Character of Christ's Words. . . 425
L. Christ a professed Miracle-worker. 427
M. Interview between Jesus and his Disciples. 428
N. Belief of the Disciples in the Deity of Jesus. . . . 440
O. Personal Appearance of Jesus; Letter of Lentulus. 430
P. Early Radicals. 432
Q. Early Dissenters. 434
R. The Terms "Christian" and "Christianity." . . . 436
S. Differences of Expression not Differences in Faith. 439
T. Testimony as to the early Spread of Christianity. . 440
U. General Progress of Christianity. 441
V. Christianity and other Religions; Differences. . . 443

THE SEARCH.

Clouds and darkness are round about him. *Psalms* xcvii. 2.

Canst thou by searching find out God? *Job* xi. 7.

No facts to me are sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker, with no past at my back.
EMERSON.

Would this weary life were spent,
Would this fruitless search were o'er,
And rather than such visions, — blessed
The gloomiest depth of nothingness. STERLING.

But what am I?
An infant in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry. TENNYSON.

Did the Almighty, holding in his right hand *Truth*, and in his left *Search after Truth*, deign to proffer me the one, I should request *Search after Truth*. LESSING.

Happiness consists in a faculty having its proper object.
BUTLER.

Could I find a path to follow,
Ah, how glad I were, and blessed! SCHILLER.

The ancients were as the eagle intently gazing on what it wants strength to reach. MACKAY.

By continually seeking to know, and being continually thrown back with a deepened conviction of the impossibility of knowing, we may keep alive the consciousness, that it is alike our highest wisdom and our highest duty to regard that through which all things exist as, The Unknowable.

. . . . .

Though the Absolute cannot in any manner or degree be

known, in the strict sense of knowing, yet we find that its positive existence is a necessary datum of consciousness; that so long as consciousness continues, we cannot for an instant rid it of this datum; and that thus the belief which this datum constitutes has a higher warrant than any other whatever.

. . . . . .

We too often forget that not only is there "a soul of goodness in things evil," but very generally, also, a soul of truth in things erroneous. - HERBERT SPENCER.

Wherefore, from hence it plainly appears, that these Platonic and Egyptian pagans, who thus reduced their multiplicity of gods to the divine ideas, did not therefore make them to be so many minds or spirits, really distinct from the supreme God (though dependent on him too), but indeed only so many partial considerations of one God, as being all things, that is, containing within himself the causes of all things. And accordingly we find that the Egyptian theologers called their religious animals symbols of the eternal ideas; so did they also call them symbols of God.

Celsus applauds the Egyptian theologers talking so magnificently and mysteriously of those brute animals worshipped by them, and affirming them to be certain symbols of God.

But lastly, as God was supposed by these pagans not only to pervade all things, and to fill all things, but also he, being the cause of all things, to be himself in a manner all things, so was he called also by the name of everything, or everything called by his name; that is, the several things of nature and parts of the world were themselves verbally deified by these pagans, and called gods and goddesses. Not that they really accounted them such in themselves, but that they thought fit in this manner to acknowledge God in them, as the author of them all. CUDWORTH.

All mythologies were once philosophies. SAUERTEIG.

Such thoughts, the wreck of Paradise,
Through many a dreary age,
Upbore whate'er of good or wise
Yet lived in bard or sage. KEBLE.

Our duty is, neither to ridicule the affairs of men, nor to deplore, but simply to understand them. SPINOZA.

Making their lives a prayer,
. . . . .
The whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
BROWNING.

All errors of this kind (naturalisms) — and in the present day we are in constant and grievous danger of falling into them — arise from the originally mistaken idea that man can, "by searching find out God — find out the Almighty to perfection;" that is to say, by help of courses of reasoning and accumulations of science, apprehend the nature of the Deity in a more exalted and more accurate manner than in a state of comparative ignorance; whereas it is clearly necessary, from the beginning to the end of time, that God's way of revealing himself to his creatures should be a simple way, which all those creatures may understand.

This conception of God, which is the child's, is evidently the only one which can be universal, and therefore the only one which *for us* can be true. The moment that, in our pride of heart, we refuse to accept the condescension of the Almighty, and desire him, instead of stooping to hold our hands, to rise up before us into his glory, — we hoping that by standing in a grain of dust or two of human knowledge higher than our fellows, we may behold the Creator as he rises, — God takes us at our word; he rises into his own invisible and inconceivable majesty; he goes forth upon the ways which are not our ways, and retires into the thoughts which are not our thoughts; and we are left alone. And presently we say in our vain hearts, "There is no God."
RUSKIN.

THE SEARCH.

INTRODUCTORY.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER gives the following account of the birth of his self-consciousness: —

"Never shall I forget the phenomenon in myself, never till now recited, when I stood by the birth of my own self-consciousness, the place and time of which are distinct in my memory. On a certain forenoon, I stood, a very young child, within the house-door, and was looking out towards the wood-pile, when, in an instant, the inner revelation, '*I* am *I*,' like lightning from heaven, flashed and stood brightly before me; in that moment had I seen myself as 'I' for the first time and forever."

All mental action before this experience had doubtless been little other than mere animal sensation, perception, and instinct. This dawning consciousness of one's self, be the time and place remembered or forgotten, is the first mental act that rises above mere brute thought. The germ of something higher has previously been in the mind, but no birth. It is this consciousness which thenceforth announces that the thinker is no longer a brute, but a man.

Next, and while this child-man is still standing in the "house-door," he rubs his eyes, looks about, is impressed by the immense handicraft surrounding him and thence an additional revelation flashes suddenly and stands brightly before him, and the grand thought of One over and above all, likewise for the first time and forever, takes possession of the mind.*

This experience, in one form or another, is universal. A glance over the field of history confirms the position, and everywhere discovers the presence of the *God-idea*. Its existence, as we have just seen, depends upon no process of reasoning, but is natural, and is just as authoritative in the mind of man before Paley touches it, as after he leaves it. Consciousness of self and a conviction of God's existence hold such intimate relations one to the other that the one must, it would seem, instantly follow the other. The soul is an expression of God, and the moment the expression recognizes itself it recognizes its author. The rock and the horse do not recognize God, because they do not recognize themselves. This consciousness of self and this attendant conception of God are between man and God an exchange of glances.† The

* We call attention to Emerson's expression embodying this thought, notwithstanding his assertion that the soul and God are identical: —

"I clap my hands in infantine joy and amazement, before the first opening to me of this august magnificence, old with the lore and homage of innumerable ages."

† Schleiermacher and after him Theodore Parker were not far from the truth in basing the first principles of essential religion upon, first, the feeling of dependence, and, second, a something to depend upon.

thinker in this step is no longer a man-being, but a religious being.

But more than this: the instant these two products, self and God, are presented to the mind, that instant, from the natural constitution of things, will result an effort to bring and to bind them both together, — the man and the God, — that they may be not one *and* the same, but one, though different. This is the foundation of all different religions. How shall this be done becomes the abiding question. By whom, or by what, engages all thought. Every phase of religious belief radiates from and returns to this centre, and from it commences, in theory and in fact, the human *search*.

The efforts of men in this direction, it is true, have often seemed like a game of "hide and seek," the *buffed* man meeting many an obstacle, catching many a fall, and shedding many a tear; but none the less is he resolved never to take "no" for an answer.

"Feeling after if haply they may find" of the apostle becomes, in the connection, both suggestive and impressive. In it is embodied the religious history of the world. It also, in the present order of things, represents, not only man's request for an introduction to the Deity, but man's effort at restoration. Continued in faith, it will doubtless end in "finding" somewhat! It will at last be "accounted for righteousness." Yet it always has had, and probably always will have, its natural limitations. How can it be otherwise, since "the Infinite, from whatever side we view it, appears encompassed with contradictions," * and "is not a relative, but an absolute mystery," † and since the search,

* Mansel. † Spencer.

in fact, and in history, as well as in scriptural representation, is the figure of man standing, or cautiously moving with outstretched hands, but bandaged eyes? Even were present difficulties removed, there will be doubtless other natural horizons, still farther onward, ever appearing, and soon presenting fresh difficulties until man's consciousness becomes identical with God's; can that ever be?

But we may note another feature in the development of man's religious ideas. So far as the race is affected by the sense of guilt, the idea of mediation has assumed the form of sacrifice. "I consider sacrifice," remarks Madame de Staël, correctly, "the basis of all religion." In some instances it is vicarious, in others it is personal. Man has often been the victim offered, and in some instances it has been thought that a Divine Man, an Incarnate Divine Man, is necessary to reveal the hidden God, and unite humanity to Him.

Beginning with some of the older religions as representative, it is interesting to trace from primative truths, through comparative theology, the development of these various religious ideas.

COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY.

I.

THE BRAHMIN.

THE original religion of the land of the seven rivers, which stretches from the Indus to the Hesidrus, came from Bactria.* Among the mountaineer and nomadic tribes which inhabited this ancient kingdom of Asia there existed, long before their conquest by Cyrus, a system of religion which, with subsequent modifications, has been embraced by a larger number of mankind than any other. Its antiquity is so great, and facts respecting it so meagre, that it cannot be fathomed with anything like precision. Its truths appear to have been handed down by oral tradition, to have been enthroned to some extent in the songs and hymns of the people, exemplified, doubtless, in the rustic and religious life of the people, and to have furnished more or less of that material which has entered into the religions of all the Aryan nations — the Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Celts, Slaves, and Teutons.

The more recent investigations in the sciences of

* Modern Bokhara.

comparative religions and philology decide that the worship of this people was originally simple, though sacrificial; the religious type was a pure monotheism, resembling closely the worship of Israel in Palestine. Data of a character beyond question show that the later and modified religion consisted in the worship of the divine in nature. The oldest divinity, Deva, the "all-embracing heavens," corresponds precisely with *Canopus* of the Greeks.

The other gods were personified powers of nature. Agni, the god of fire, played a most important part. He was the mediator, the one who presented all prayers offered by mortals to Deva, and burned their sacrifices.

During these early stages of the Hindoo religion, which extended, according to Dr. Haug, from 2000 to 1200 B. C., there appear to have been no priestly orders. It was the Hindoo patriarchal age in which the head of the family was priest, or, without such a head, every man was his own priest. To see God, and not mere man, the infinite, and not the finite, was the foundation of the old Hindoo effort and faith. Subsequently the nations of India adopted a more orderly and social constitution, abandoned their nomadic and warlike life, collected their ancient sacred writings, chiefly songs and hymns, into an authorized canon, and guarded them with jealousy almost equal to that of the Jewish Rabbins; they also instituted the priestly class, whose office was to represent the condition and wants of the people before the deity. The chief function of the priesthood was prayer — *brahma;* hence *Brahmins*, i. e., praying.

After this date the Hindoos possessed greater formal piety, but were more grossly immoral. The old Veda divinities were in time subordinated entirely to Brahma, and even the earlier phases of Indian theology resolved themselves into the doctrine of the abstract unity — a kind of impersonal *all.*

The modern Hindoo, in moments of religious excitement, declares that he believes in three hundred and thirty million gods. Here would seem to be the extreme of polytheism. Yet, to whatever natural object he looks, and to whatever form of intelligence he offers his devotions, he is at every step and in every effort seeking after the negative One — the eternal Check.* The Brahmin, however, so far as he is not an ignorant and brutish idolater, asks different creatures and supplicates different objects with the sole purpose that they may inform him where he can find the Unseen; it is his way of erecting an altar to the Unknown God. His life, in fine, is a continued effort to approach, through some intervening something elevated into a god, to the presence of Brahm, who is the One Infinite Illumination, the Absolute and Self-Existent, the Mentor, and the All, who lies upon "eternity and the stars." It is, we think, usually conceded at the present time that not only was the original Bactrian, but the derived Vedic and the subsequent Brahmin idea were also strictly monotheistic. "There can be no doubt," says Max Müller, "that the fun-

* This semi-negative attitude respecting the deity is represented by the modern Shakers as the "obstruction." Thus with Socrates' *genius*, which did not advise him how to act, but dissuaded him from evil.

damental doctrine of the Vedas is monotheism." Though all things may be involved in the Brahmin's general conception of deity, yet his monotheism clearly appears in the formation of his creed—"Spirit alone is this All."

"To know that God is, and that all is God, this is the substance of the Vedas," say the Vedas. "It is found in the Vedas that none but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man." The Vedas often repeat the text, "There is in truth but one deity, the Supreme Spirit;" and often repeat the injunction, "Adore God alone, know God alone, give up all other discourse." Its confession of faith, as far as it goes, could safely be incorporated into our own, "There is one living and true God, everlasting, without parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things. He is one and beyond description, whose glory is so great there can be no image of him." It would seem then that the multitude of invented deities in India is only an effort at mediation, and a search after mediators.

The more definite steps in this religious development are confirmatory.

Brahm, the One Supreme, was thought by Brahmins to be too much like a "consuming fire," too awful and too holy to be approached by mortals directly; there was sought, in consequence, an intervening one. Indeed, they built no temples and offered no prayers directly to Brahm. In one of the early Vedas, Brahm is introduced as seeking an image of himself, and finding it in Brahma. The relations then become

Brahm, the source of light, and Brahma, the light which flows from the source of light — the "Light of Light," as with the church Fathers; a "child springing from his father," as among the ancient Greeks. And as the child Zeus supplanted his father in Grecian mythology, so Brahm gave place to Brahma, who was either made identical with Brahm, or became for a time the sole object of Hindoo worship.

But even this reflection of the Great and Ineffable through Brahma was also at length thought by the Hindoo to be too awful for most men to endure, though not for all; hence the *caste* of India.

This resulted in a divine *call*. It was extended at first to some favored few: those who were thus called were made priests of Brahma, who thenceforth found his one adequate image in man — the priest. Hindoo image worship is only another form of manifestation and mediation. "We do not believe these statues to be Brahma, or Brahm," said a Brahmin to M. Barnier, "but only their images and representatives, and we only give them honor on account of the beings they represent." *

* The theory of this Brahmin rested upon very ancient authority. Professor Wilson, in giving an account of the Vedic hymns, remarks, "It seems very doubtful if at the time of their composition idolatry was practised in India: images of the deified elements are even now unworshipped, and, except images of the sun, I am not aware that they are ever made. The personification of the divine attributes of creation, preservation, and regeneration — Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva — originate, no doubt, with the Vedas, but they are rarely named; they are blended with the elementary deities, they enjoy no pre-eminence, nor are they objects of special

The Hindoo mythology contains two other characters which are of interest to us — Crishna Govinda, "the beautiful hero," who is the messenger of peace, and who, under human form, never ceases to be a "God-Being," — and Vishnu, who likewise combines two characters, "mortal and immortal," "being and *non*-being," "motion and rest." This Vishnu descended to the earth for the purpose of redeeming man. He is now the preserving power. He is the harbinger. He is a God assuming human flesh through an incarnation. He is to come again and judge the earth. As might be expected, Vishnu worship came in time to take the place of the original Brahma worship. Thus the work of supplanting goes on. Brahma supplants Brahm, Vishnu Brahma, and the different incarnations of Vishnu supplant one another in the continued search after One who can satisfy.

The Hindoo also discovered symbols of terror in the world, groanings in nature, fire, earthquakes, and deaths. He reasoned that they must have a cause, but the cause could not be in Brahma or Vishnu; therefore Siva, the Destroyer, was introduced into their creed.

Again, restoration and resurrection are in the world;

adoration. There is no reason from the invocations addressed to them in common with the air, water, the seasons, the plants, to suppose that they were ever worshipped under visible types. Ministration to idols in temples is held by ancient authorities infamous. Manu repeatedly classes the priests of a temple with persons unfit to be admitted to private sacrifices, or to be associated with on any occasion. It is almost certain, therefore, that the practice of worshipping idols in temples was not the religion of the Vedas."

life springs from death, and pure atmospheres have their birth in tempests. "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whence the rivers come, thither they return again." "Every thunder-storm, each tornado, is a cry for quiescence." From strife comes symmetry. All these phenomena necessitate, and in the Hindoo creed originate, the God Rajah.

From this point there is but a step to the principle of sacrifice. Brahminism was, from the outset, a blood-sacrificial religion. The Vedic hymns and prayers, as far as brought to our notice by the translators, appear, for the most part, to have been composed for sacrificial occasions. Very likely the hills of Bactria, not long after the deluge, were smoking with the choicest lambs and kine of the flock; and so the custom was handed on; a custom heroic and religious.

This idea of sacrifice lies, as a matter of fact, at the foundation of individual life in India. We read in the sacred books that "he who lives in the fire of the sacrifice is the great mediator between God and man." The individual must be completely lost in the divine essence, and become *identical* with it. The Hindoo Institutes point out two paths leading to the state of perfection — religious sacrifice and religious contemplation. Brahma sacrificed himself by descending to the earth. The Sanscrit word for "sacrifice" means "union with God." Brahma also sacrificed his own son, or emanation, for human good. Indeed, this refined pantheism of India pushed the idea of sacrifice, involving at once the highest and lowest orders, to its utmost verge. It produced both the haughtiest indi-

vidual asceticism and the conviction of Absolute Being to which all individual existence in theory, and, if need be, in fact, must be sacrificed. To enforce this idea there are occasions when their temples are made to run with blood, their enclosed grounds are clotted with blood, their garments bespotted with blood, and the whole air filled with blood.

It may be safely said that the entire philosophy underlying the development of Brahminism, its spirit of caste and its different divine manifestations, is an elaborate, scholarly, and persevering effort to explain the various phenomena of nature, and is also a restless search after a living and incarnate intelligence to communicate *with* man, and to disclose to him the otherwise unknowable. Its success has been truly grand.

There is no mistaking the underlying principles upon which it rests, and which easily account for its success. We do not say that it borrowed from Egypt or Palestine; but it borrowed from — humanity perhaps.

Its deep reverence for the divine, for illustration, is fundamental. The profanity of other nations sounds strangely enough to the Hindoo ear. Of the many dialects of India, not one of them contains language by which the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," can be broken.*

* The Rev. Dr. Scudder, the celebrated missionary to India, on his return passage, while standing on the deck of the steamer with his son, heard a gentleman employ profane language. "My friend," said the doctor, "this boy, my son, was born and brought up in a heathen country; but in all his life he never heard a man blaspheme his Maker until now."

Nor is the Divine Call of India peculiar to that country; it pervades all history. The priesthood of every nation, an Abraham and John the Baptist wherever found, and Jesus of Nazareth, show the universal demand for one set apart and consecrated for the especial services of the Unseen.

The twice-born of the Brahmins is likewise essential, and is not in form unlike the second birth of the Christian faith. Again, the creating Brahma, who is inseparable from the Absolute Thought, and who corresponds with the Egyptian Intelligence, and the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs,* is the Brahmin's anticipation of the Word-Reason in the Gospel of John.

The doctrine of a divine Incarnation associated with a sacrifice which is felt by the Hindoo to be the agency for alleviating and removing the evils of the world, is likewise prophetic of the apostle Paul's statement that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" and these different creeds bear upon their clasped hands a truth not arbitrarily assumed, but which is common to human nature. And any system of religion or philosophy which does not recognize, in one form or another, these root-principles, cannot touch human hearts, and must, sooner or later, perish from sheer lack of human support and human sympathy. Have not these subtle dreamers of India dreamed something besides dreams?

> "The primal truth
> Glimmers through many a superstitious form
> That fills the soul with unavailing ruth."

* Proverbs x. 22–32.

II.

THE BUDDHIST.

BUDDHISM is one of the sublimest religious phenomena that has visited this world. It is not a primitive religion, but was originally a feature of Brahminism; it is safe to remark that the primitive types of all known religions have only been approximately ascertained. Buddha was early worshipped by the Brahmins as one of the incarnations or manifestions of Vishnu. He was looked upon, however, as a propagator of heresies, and the originator of all forms of scepticism. This designation, Buddha, was very likely given to the reformer Sakya-muni, at first, by way of reproach, who, by a most remarkable life, raised it above obloquy, making it as distinctive and honorable as Brahm or any other descriptive term could have been.*

The modern phases of Buddhism originated in Northern India, from five hundred to a thousand years B. C., and were sincere and manly efforts to restore certain early types of Brahminism, and free

* Compare the once opprobrious terms "Christian," "Methodist," and the like.

the people from a galling yoke of hierarchy and dogma. It was a dissent of human nature and philanthropy against the obnoxious Hindoo system of religious caste.

A few leading steps in the controversy between Brahminism and Buddhism are the following: Brahm, of Brahminism, is a passive intelligence, with which it was contended that the sacerdotal orders only, may through Brahma ultimately become purely identical.

The corruptions of the priesthood, as with the Roman clergy before the Reformation, after a while brought a stigma upon this dogma. The more intelligent among the people felt they were as good, and if as good, then as worthy of divine honors, as their priests. This led them to demand for a God, a being less abstract and more active; one who can enter into fellowship, not with one class, the priests merely, but with all classes alike.

These bold Protestants of their time and country, like Luther and the Reformers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, called upon their countrymen not to trust the sacerdotal classes, not to worship them, or Brahm through them, but to become their own priests, and worship, "not on this mountain" or that, but everywhere and directly the universal Intelligence. These reformatory movements led to controversy, and were doubtless inaugurated under severe persecution. The bloody Spanish Inquisition may have been anticipated.

As has always been the case with similar reforms, it was a time, too, of religious break-up, attended with many and diverse "departures." The infidel philosophies of India probably took their rise in this period. Humanitarian, rationalistic, naturalistic, and materialis-

tic parties appeared, contesting the pre-eminence of their several claims to universal respect. India must have had its Hobbes, its Voltaire, and possibly its Frederick the Great. It is with not a little interest we find the modern "Development" theory started at this time, or near it, in the formula, "The rising of the world is a natural cause."

But too many interests supported Brahminism to allow it to be overthrown by infidelities worse than itself, or supplanted by a revolution better than itself, but which was not without its grand defects. The seed of scepticism remained, however, producing more or less fruit ever after.

Buddhism soon yielded, and her noble sages became pilgrims, and fled to other countries. The leading spirit in this reformatory movement was Siddharta, of the family of the Sakya. He has borne the names of Sakya-muni, Sramana, Gautama, and Buddha.

He told the people that purity, abstinence, patience, brotherly love, and repentance were better than sacrifice. He, like Jesus, became the poor man's preacher and friend, employed the language of the common people, and chose his followers out of all classes, even from among the poorest women.

The subsequent success of Buddhism is well nigh incredible. It spread with amazing rapidity, and has held its ascendency with unparalleled vigor. It is to-day the faith of Thibet, Siam, of the Burmese Empire, Cochin China, Japan, Ceylon, and is the popular, though not the state religion of China. The later Yoga system of Brahmin asceticism was formed by the introduction of Buddhistic elements, and to Buddhism is almost

entirely indebted for its success. Buddhism is therefore, in numbers, the most extensively prevailing religion that has ever existed in this world. It has not less than three hundred million disciples. It holds under its sway one third of the globe, and perhaps it might be worse held.

There are those who look upon this great religious movement as of no account. To say that it is not worthy of a moment's attention is easy enough, but argues a void in the speaker. Ideas which have exercised sway over such multitudes must, from the nature of the case, have foundation in fact and truth. Upon their surface there may be unseemly "parasite growths," but underneath there are vitality and reality. Newman is not far from correct in saying that "the majority is always true-hearted." "What every man says must be true" contains truth. It is a late day for Christianity to fall into a jealous fit, for fear that she has something to lose from paying respect to the thoughts of so many men. There is truth in Buddhism, "an inward perennial truth," or there is truth nowhere. These fore-thoughts of Buddhisits may be as good and the same as our after-thoughts. Sakya-muni peered for a time into the very heart and depths of divine things. His religious system is the "enormous shadow" of what he saw. His apprehensions may have anticipated and foreshadowed the similar apprehensions of all believers in all ages. He looked and saw for others. "What he says, all men were not far from saying — were longing to say. The Thoughts of all start up, as from painful enchanted sleep, round his Thought, answering to it, Yes, even

so! Joyfully to men as the dawning of day from night, is it not, indeed, the awakening for them from no being into being, from death into life?" * from a night of nightmare into the tranquil smile of spring morning? The "perplexing jungle of Paganism" springs from a grand tap-root, nourished by the soul's life and thought. Its root is embedded in human nature; its leaves can but exhale something of truth. All admit that Christianity is the highest form of religious truth and thought. Buddhism approaches and makes obeisance: why scoff at it? Christians can afford to be something near as charitable as the Buddhist of Ceylon who surprised a missionary by saying, "I respect Christianity because I regard it as a help to Buddhism."

Recall some of its great lessons to the race. It taught that not merely the priest, but the vilest person of the vilest race, even if a woman,† may become one with Buddha. The word *Buddha* means pure intelligence — the Brahm of Hindooism. Buddha and Brahm are of cognate, if not of the same signification.

No thoughts known to the world could be, therefore, more inspiring to Brahmin or Buddhist, than identity with this divine intelligence of Brahm and Buddha. The cry in fact to all nations was, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," "without money," "without price," and "without priest." Thirsty humanity lifted its drooping eyes and exclaimed, "I would, and I *will*." Buddhism also maintains the highest admiration for intelligence. The low estimate placed upon

* Carlyle.

† It is now universally admitted that women are better treated by Buddhism than by any other Oriental religion.

human life by the Brahmin, the Buddhist could not brook.

Intelligence, wherever found, to him is sacred. A drop of human blood must not be spilt. The laws of Gautama rigidly forbid the killing of any animal, from the minutest insect even, up to man. Brutes are felt by the Buddhist to have intelligence. They even must not be offered in sacrifice. Their half-human faculites and affections are thought to be other forms of Buddha. Buddhism was, therefore, consistent and emphatic in saying to the world, "I will defend your life, for it is grand and sacred." "You need spill no more blood." "Hereafter crown your altars, instead, with fruit and flowers." Affrighted humanity fleeing from the sacrificial knife, and crushed under the footfall of tyrants and priests, heard the message, and said, "I will — defend me."

Buddhism also advocated not only the sacredness but the infinite capacity, nay, the infinite actuality, of the human intellect. "The one infallible diagnostic of Buddhism is a belief in the infinite capacity of the human intellect." * Emerson, speaking of "the infinite enlargement of the heart, with a power of growth to a new infinite on every side," and of the soul of man as "an immensity not possessed, and that cannot be possessed," but reiterates sentiments with which Buddhism abounds.

It also taught that the Pure Intelligence, the Illimitable One, may be embodied in an infant. It affirmed that men are not brutes, but the true high priests of the

* Hodgson.

universe, nay, even gods. It anticipated in the same spirit the claim of Empedocles, "I am God," indorsed by our New England philosopher. "The seer and the spectacle, the subject and object, are one." * It anticipated the Spirit of Revelation, but with different import. "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are the children of the Most High." † It told the mother that her child need not, and must not, be plunged into the Ganges, but be reared; for in the image of God had it been created, and "of such is the kingdom of heaven." No wonder that these declarations were hailed as messages from heaven, and that whole tribes and whole nations exclaimed, "We too are Buddhists." And who is not, in these respects, a Buddhist?

But again, to the Buddhist, belief in God is the most constant and the most awful of all thoughts; and his relation to Him started strange and deep questions. Explanations were demanded; thence other religious positions were taken. The Buddhist saw, for instance, that men are degraded; hence Buddha is represented as descending to earth, in order to raise men into a higher and purer life. The transcendental school holds that this Buddha was not a real personage, but the imaginary or spiritual character of a perfectly spotless being, God's representative, an example and a Saviour.

Though Buddhism started out as a protest against the idea of any kind of intervention or formal mediation between God and man, and likewise against the idea of sacrifice as an element of reconciliation, still, through a philosophical necessity, both these ideas

* Emerson. † Psalm lxxxii. 6.

gradually fastened themselves upon the system, though not in old and repulsive forms, yet in essential forms. Buddhism in these, as also in certain other matters, has, like Roman Catholicism, been, beyond question, a flexible religion, and upon this, in a measure, has depended its success.

Notice further developments: There is pure intelligence, and there is matter, said the Buddhist, but these positions inevitably lead to a third.* There is a mediating influence or personage who occupies the intervening territory, and this is Sanga. The Buddhist's idea of the God-man appears also in those ancient idols which represent God's illimitable greatness in colossal human forms. The solemn idea of sacrifice, strange and contradictory as it may seem, also found an important place in the Buddhist faith. It is really the essential foundation of its view of human and divine relations. The Buddhist's deity, not the priest, is to destroy man and perfect him, and perfect by destroying, and make perfect by absorption. The sacrificial idea is thus retained, but the prerogative of it is left, not with the *caste*, but with God. The Sankhya Cajhila state that "sacrifice is the best of all *temporal* means of elevation; but to arrive at the possession of the prerogatives of the wise, *wisdom* itself must be sought." The lofty idea here embodied is, that "temporal means," like the Jewish economy, must give place to something higher; yet these temporal means must not be discarded. The purer Buddhist souls

* "The conception of religion presupposes, (*a*) God as object; (*b*) man as subject; (*c*) the mutual relation existing between them." — PROFESSOR J. H. SCHOLTEN.

seemed to half apprehend that wonderful economy which embraces all others, and which does not abolish the idea of sacrifice, but sees that Divine Reason has somehow been offered, "once for all," and that there is no longer needed a sacrifice of blood for sin. Indeed, the more we examine the Christian side of Buddhism, the more it seems to be crowded with points of light; though its dark side leaves its followers in deepest ignorance and superstition. Notice additional aspects.

The Buddhist believes, for instance, that it is the privilege of divine men to contemplate divinity in its purity. It is likewise the teaching of Christianity that good men may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.*

This privilege, says the Buddhist, is obtained by sanctification. And thus Jesus prays the Father to sanctify his disciples through divine truth.†

Buddhism calls good men Buddhas; Christianity calls them "sons of God." Buddhism affirms and reaffirms that there must be some one person, and he a human person, in whom "perfect wisdom" resides. He may be a child in form, but he must be a God in power. All other persons utter only a part of the divine mind; this One is himself perfect "Utterance." He is the perfect Image. Thus also Christianity points to One who is the Word, and in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." ‡

The Buddhist believes in the final loss of himself in some form of the Deity, perhaps the negative. The thought startles him, and almost induces non-belief.

* John xvii. 3. † John xvii. 17. ‡ Col. ii. 9.

Nirvana, the absorbing One, is — Nothing. The Christian also holds to the well nigh overwhelming thought of the union of Father, Son, and Spirit in One, which thought our Saviour extends until it embraces all the pure in heart: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." *

We need not carry our investigations further. We have seen enough to convince us that in Buddhism there may be a "half-play," but also "real earnest" — rubbish, but gold.

Yes, it may be asked, but has not too much been shown? Why the need of special revelations, if these seekers have come so near God's facts? If Buddhism has done so much, why may it not do all? If so near the truth, why may it not be the truth?

Suppose, philosophically, there could be no reply; there are facts. One is, that there is no joy in Buddhism nothing but profound sorrow. With other lights about it, there is also felt to be for it no further progress. Beyond the Mongol nations it can never step. The system has truth, but is not *the Truth;* paths it has, but is not *the Way;* light it gives, but not *the Light;*

* John xvii. 21. This thought is also peculiarly delightful to Emerson; so much so that he ventures a compliment upon the apostle who re-stated the same idea. "There never was a young philosopher whose breeding had fallen into the Christian church, by whom that brave text of Paul's was not specially prized — 'Then shall also the Son be subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.' Let the claims and virtue of persons be never so great and welcome, the instinct of man presses eagerly onward to the impersonal and illimitable."

and never so sterile have been its fields as they are to-day. "It is now Atheism, fast merging into utter Idolatry." * With these thoughts in mind we may admit all that the admirers of the system claim for it. Nay, we are desirous of allowing that these devout thinkers deciphered in a rude style their inmost thoughts, which are also inmost truths. They saw, simply, what all true and earnest men must always see. "There is a Delphi and a Pythoness in every human breast," though not all are willing or know how, to listen. Externals change and pass away, but underneath the crust there are essentials which remain forever. God loves truth wherever found, and will see to it that nothing harms it. No age in history has been a thoroughly dark age. God has always kept fires lighted upon some altars. "The whole Past, as I keep repeating," says Carlyle, "is the possession of the Present; the Past had always something *true*, and is a precious possession. In a different time, in a different place, it is always some other *side* of our common Human Nature that has been developing itself. The actual True is the *sum* of all these; not any one of them by itself constitutes what of Human Nature is hitherto developed. Better to know them all than misknow them. 'To which of these three Religions do you specially adhere?' inquires Meister of his Teacher. 'To all the Three,' answers the other. 'To all the Three; for they by their union first constitute the True Religion.'"

* Legge.

III.

THE GREEK AND ROMAN.

GRECIAN mythology presents a field so vast and attractive, of such lofty spiritual development, and is so crowded with thoughts of the divine, that we hesitate before entering it, lest, while searching for the vital points demanded by our discussion, we be allured from the chief purpose, and linger here and there until the ultimate design eludes us.

We shall not attempt, in this review, to follow the chronological order of development, because the chronological and logical orders often seem at variance.

We also treat of the Grecian and Roman faiths as though they were one. The earlier religion of the Sabines, who inhabited the hills around Rome, is very little known. It may have had an Indian origin, and may have slightly modified the subsequent Roman faith. But Greek culture so affected the Roman that it seems dependent upon it. The same is true of its later mythology; it does not present itself as essentially independent.*

* We are aware that Hegel claims that the resemblance between the two religions is superficial. Cicero ought to be

The only marked distinction is, that the æsthetic and moral character of the Grecian people was deified, while the deification in case of the Romans had relation to their practical and political character.* There was, in consequence, but little piety in Rome; religion was utilitarian. It was different for a time, at least, in Greece.

But setting aside these comparisons, we seek leading ideas. It is well known to all, that first and last the God-idea pervaded to the fullest extent the ancient Grecian faith. Pantheism nowhere appears. Grecian theism was in vogue long before the time of Homer, who, though the first theologian of Greece, invented nothing; he gathered up the thoughts of ancients and of his contemporaries and set them to music; he was the Grecian Ezra.†

Tyler shows clearly in his chapter on "The Homeric Doctrine of the Gods," that correct attributes were theoretically ascribed to them; but their conduct, as represented, presents thereto strange incongruities. The false ideas are the invention of men, the correct ones are the intuitive and almost unconscious testimony of the reason and conscience of man to the truth of God.

good authority. "A full river of influence," he says, "and not a little brook, has flowed into Rome out of Greece."

* Scholten.

† It will afford the Bible believer no little delight to notice how modern investigations are accumulating evidence, directly and indirectly, in support of Scripture truth. They point with an absolutely inflexible finger to a common original centre or source for mankind — an Eden, an ark, one blood one family, and one religion, received by inspiration or developed by a common mind.

Æschylus, the later "theological poet" of Greece, represents the supreme deity as "the universal father," "the universal cause," the "all-seer," and "all-doer," and "all-wise." and "holy." and "merciful," the "most high and perfect one, blessed Zeus."

The current expressions, "God grant," "if God will," "God bless thee," "God will make amends," "God does good, men ill," betray most clearly a popular belief in God's unity. Tertullian, Cyprian, and Arnobius employ with great force against the pagans an argument based upon this thought.

The relations of Zeus to the Invisible and Unknown have not yet been well drawn. This Zeus-deity merely stands at the head of Grecian civilization, art, and poetry. The representations that he is universal and eternal must be received with qualification, for he was always represented as *specific*, as well as *generic*. He brings the world into light, but his inviolable decrees *anticipated his own birth*, and he has father and mother; so that we may well ask, back of Zeus and back of Saturn, back of Cœlus, or Uranus, and Terra, is — what?

Philosophy gives an indirect answer to the question. Pythagoras and Philolaus tell us that "God" and "One" are the same. Zeno said that no temples should be built to that deity, who is so far above all works of art and of artisans. Thales taught that the formative principle of motion, somehow connected with water, is God. This reminds one of Mr. Carlyle's "Force," Darwin's "Development," and Huxley's "Protoplasm."

Apollonius taught that no offerings should be made

to that God who is called the First. It was a dictum of Aristotle that "God, who is invisible to every mortal, is seen alone in his works." We perceive errors, undoubtedly, in these speculations, but they are errors that lie near or in the direction of truth. The *unit* of Pythagoras, the *infinite* of Anaximander, *water* of Thales, *air* of Anaximenes, the *symmetry* of Anaxagoras, the *good* of Euclid, the *one* and *all* of Plato, mean more than they express. "They stand for a great unutterable thought." They were stepping-stones in the majestic struggle of the human intellect towards the Invisible One, yet only stepping-stones. They were attempted solutions of the riddles and enigmas of divine manifestation, yet only attempts. We fail not to recognize in these higher philosophical speculations of the daring minds of Greece a vigorous but repeatedly baffled search after God. And were this, as should be the case, the attitude of modern scientific speculation, it would no longer call forth the antagonism of Christian faith.

But these ideas of the philosophers were too abstract for the popular mind. We therefore discover a continual blending of the God-idea with the idea of a mediator. A tangible God was, from the nature of the case, resolutely demanded. Zeus answered this description for a season, and in the mean time that which is beyond Zeus was, by the people, forgotten. The masses in their search lost heart when they reached Zeus, and would go no farther. From terror, wonder, or perplexity of the vastness of the All Soul, even the search for it was abandoned. It was at this point that Grecian idolatry began; and here be-

gins all idolatry. The moment Zeus in Greece and Jupiter in Rome became the only generally recognized First and Father of all, that moment the earlier mythologies of Greece and Rome, except a few faint traces, were abandoned and lost; and lost, it will be observed, in consequence of an existing and absolute necessity of a mediator between the First God, whoever he is, and man. It is merely an unconscious repetition of what took place with both Brahminism and Buddhism; nay, it is what occurs in every human soul, as well as in every religious system — an effort to clear away all rubbish, and find some one, or some thing, real and available between God and man.

Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, as well as the masses of the people discovering no direct approach to God, were ever looking for this *stand-between*. Hence Porphyry and Phidias defended the popular image worship. Something for a mediator there must be, they claimed; the what, was a matter of opinion. The popular Zeus-manifestation could not long satisfy. He was too well known to the philosophers, and not well enough known to the masses. Socrates embodied a prevailing sentiment, when he said that the true religious philosophy for imperfect beings is "an infinite search after the divine." "What God is," he says, "I know not; what he is not, I know." He knew he was not Zeus.

"Believe in God and adore him," said one of the Greek poets, "but investigate him not: the inquiry is fruitless."

"O Jupiter!" said Euripides, "I know nothing of thee but thy name."

How clearly these expressions embody Spencer's theory of the Unknowable. Forcibly do they confirm Hobbes's remark, "The name of God is used, not to make us conceive him, for he is inconceivable; but that we may honor him." An echo is all this of the same sublime sentiment which broke from the lips of Job — "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

In this confused condition of things, the leading minds of Greece vacillated between hope and despair; they went from the Peripatetics to the Stoics, and from the Stoics to the Platonics; but all seemed alike shrouded in confusion, contradiction, and doubt. Plato significantly defined man as the "hunter after truth." Diogenes lighted his lantern and walked the streets of Athens in daylight to find a — man; a faultless man; an ideal man; a leader to higher attainments. This effort of the Greek philosopher calls to mind the similar challenge of the Hebrew prophet, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." *

The search, at times, seemed to end in despair. The elder Pliny was in so great darkness while attempting to understand the way in which the "immeasurable creative Spirit" could be related to man, that he exclaimed, "What is God? If in truth he be anything distinct from the world, it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. It is a foolish delusion to imagine that the infinite spirit would concern himself with the petty affairs of men. Man is full

* Jeremiah v. 1.

of desires. Man's nature is a lie. The greatest good God has bestowed on man is the power of taking his own life."

Philosophers were at times exasperated into avowing themselves atheists. Lucretius openly denied the existence of the gods, Euhemerus made sport of them, reduced them to a history of nature and to symbols of agriculture, and Plutarch subtilized them. At other times Nature was looked upon as the tie between God and man. Plato, who was both the most ultra of spiritualists and the most ultra of materialists, found the chief divine manifestation in the outer universe. This was also a phase of ancient Persian worship.

There were two Gods in Plato's scheme, the Seen and the Unseen; upon the principle of the *Ego* and the *Alter Ego*. The universe was simply a created God, "the only begotten universe." It was something

> "Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."

Even the world, to Plato's mind, has a soul; therefore it was, he thought, an animal. We can easily imagine him bowing to the stars throbbing in the midnight heavens, and to the various forms of earthly beauty, as our New England philosopher gives his lusty morning salute to the whispering pine or the incoming ocean. But Plato fondly and easily stepped from this materialism into spiritualistic idealism. Nature, he felt, as we may presently see, was not the only tie between God and man.

Back of all this materialism and these troops of gods, we find in others, as well as in Plato, occasional

glimpses of a really lofty spiritualism. Such, most likely, was the original basis of all Grecian mythology. Mercury, the messenger of God, Perseus, born of a virgin, Hercules, who burned himself to death, Orpheus, Musæus, Melampus, and Pompilius Numa of Rome enter into a material, better, perhaps, an objective superstructure, which has a profound and everlasting spiritual basis. As soon as the material form, or the personification, was presented, it caught the popular eye, and held it; and this was the heathen's necessity, but also his mistake. Much advantage had the Jew; it rested chiefly in his Scripture and authority.

It was so much easier for the Greek to speak of Phœbus Apollo, Pallas Athene, Aphrodite, Ares, Hephæstus, Hestia, Hermes, Artemis, than of the abstract powers of nature which they were made to represent; and so very much easier than to dwell upon the Universal Abstract which lies, and is felt to lie, back of all, that they often fell into unbelief and listlessness. In their doubt and scepticism they came to worship the creature more than the creator. Indolence is usually the nurse, if not the mother, of scepticism.

But the strongest incentive to the search, in case of the Greek as with other nations, was the felt necessity of a mediator, who is able to remove human guilt. If he could not do this, he was at once dismissed. This matter of guilt always has been, and always will be, the fearfulest chasm between God and man. "No man is found," says Seneca, "who can acquit himself." "If you wish to be good," says Epictetus, "first believe that you are bad." "There is want-

ing," says Porphyry, "some universal method of delivering men's souls, which no sect of philosophy has ever yet found out."

These expressions are similar to Plato's earnest longing for emancipation and redemption; they are the anticipation of that wail which broke from the soul of the great apostle, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

As might be expected, both from the nature of the case and from universal experience, different forms of sacrifice, among the Greeks and Romans, were resorted to for relief. The earlier sacrifices of the Greeks consisted of human victims. These were subsequently abandoned, still, sacrifice in some form and with some kinds of victims, was practised to the last, excepting where a religious polytheism had given place to a blank atheism. Excuses for sin, based upon the derelictions of the gods, who were often represented as partakers in human crimes, afforded no permanent relief. The dissatisfaction and the restless search for something to relieve and restore continued. We thus arrive at the basis of Grecian and Roman, as of all other forms of polytheism; they spring from desires and efforts to find God, and a mediator between God and man; one who can unite to God, and save from guilt. This is a tenet of universal and essential theology. The gods are multiplied among heathen nations because they do not, in these respects, satisfy. Greek sculpture rose to perfection, but rose while feeling after, if haply it could find and reproduce, a God incarnate; no other thought could have kindled such enthusiasm.

Every new God is, in fact, the product of deep desires, and shows that the search had hitherto been comparatively fruitless. The hand, in its reaching, had hit upon something, but not the thing. Plato represents Socrates as advising men to investigate and learn from others respecting these great themes, and then risk themselves, as on a raft, until they can be carried more safely, or with less risk, on a surer conveyance, or some divine Logos.*

A thousand years later, when Paul visited Athens, her inhabitants were still in search, and in public form recognized the existence of the Unknown. These many gods of Greece and Rome, of Persia and Egypt, as also those of the Hindoo faith, are so many disappointments. They are meant for mediators, radiations of the supreme unity; but each has, after a while, received the slight and negative of the people in the suggestive cry, "We look for another!" Monotheism, as we have seen, has always been embosomed in polytheism, notwithstanding its million gods; and pantheism always has been, as it is to-day, an effort of cultivated thought to mediate between the finite and infinite.†

* Socrates, endeavoring to satisfy the mind of Alcibiades on the subject of acceptable worship, says, "It is, therefore, necessary to wait till some one may teach us how it behooves us to conduct ourselves both towards the gods and men." To which Alcibiades responds, "When shall that time arrive, O Socrates? and who shall that teacher be? for most eagerly do I wish to see such a man."

† Professor Naville draws this thought out respecting polytheism by a very happy figure: "Cut to the ground a young and vigorous beech tree, and come back a few years afterwards; in place of the tree cut down you will find cop-

"When men are questioned concerning the nature of divinity," says Maximus of Tyre, "their answers are all different; yet, notwithstanding all this prodigious variety of opinions, you will find one and the same feeling throughout the earth; viz., that there is but one God, the Father of all." There is here recognized a universal religious consciousness.

It is true that all forms of ancient polytheism have suffered terrible corruptions. There is truth in the statement that development, in all cases, tends "to sacerdotalism, ritualism, polytheism, and idolatry." It is not, therefore, surprising that the original conceptions which the ancients attempted to embody have been, in most instances, so strangely distorted as to escape recognition; still, the religious intuitions which produced polytheism are, doubtless, of higher order than those which leave to the world nothing save a cold, scientific, and distant monotheism. Polytheism may have been the best expression of a new order of things that an unaided monotheism could devise. It

pice wood; the sap which nourished a single trunk has been divided among a multitude of shoots. This comparison expresses well enough the opinion which tends to prevail among our learned men on the subject of the historical development of religions. The idea of the only God is at the root; it is primitive, polytheism is derivative. A forgotten, and as it were slumbering, monotheism exists before the worship of idols; it is the concealed trunk which supports them, but the idols have absorbed all the sap."

Pictet confirms the statement. "The general impression of the most distinguished mythologists of the present day is, that monotheism is at the foundation of all pagan mythology."

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is mediatorial throughout; nay, polytheism, rising from monotheism, may have been its prophetic announcement that there cometh One, the latchets of whose shoes it could not unloose.*

Before closing this review of Grecian and Roman mythology, we advance another step, and call attention to two quite distinctly marked developments of thought, which we take the liberty of denominating Grecian *humanitarianism* and Grecian *spiritualism*. It is interesting to notice in these and modern theories how often and fully the moral and religious world repeats itself.

The thought in either case, it will be noticed, points directly to a mediator who is somehow human and somehow divine. At times, so strong was the inclination in Greece and Rome to convert ordinary men into mediators, that great care had to be exercised by the philosophers, lest unworthy and ungodly persons should be elected to the office by vote of a fickle populace. Plutarch throws out his challenge and warning thus: "If any man, elated by arrogance, has claimed the attributes of a God, his career has ever been but

* It is possible that Egypt may be an exception to the general rule, her polytheism arising and becoming established at once, and from pure political considerations and changes. Egypt, in very ancient times, was divided into several states. Each capital, as Memphis, On, This, and Thebes, worshipped its supreme God under a distinct name, as Phtah, Ra, Amun. These states were subsequently united under one government apparently by mutual consent, or upon such conditions as allowed the gods of the different provinces to stand on equal footing in the national Pantheon.

short, and he has been ignominiously driven out from the temple he desecrates."

Pindar placed the greatest stress upon overcoming the tendency among men to "confound the merely human and divine." To him, as to us, the line between the two is "unsurpassable." Unintentionally, however, some of the leading philosophers had fostered these popular impulses.

Pythagoras, Plato, and Euripides, for instance, had repeatedly set forth, in various forms, the thought that "men are mortal gods, and gods are immortal men."

The Greek, in common with the Oriental systems, though in different forms of development, held the opinion that there is "an essential divinity in the eminently good man, and a possible association, or connection, of the Godhead with humanity." *

It was believed by some philosophers that all men have power over nature, and that this power results from some kind of connection with the divine. There are, doubtless, grains of truth in these representations. But when they were caught up by the common people, who could not well wield them, they were so sadly perverted that it came to be, in men's imaginings, no strange thing for the gods in human forms to walk the earth.

The usual effort on the part of the Greek was to humanize deity; yet he sometimes yielded to the spirit of Orientalism, and deified humanity. That was the popular Grecian creed which set forth as fundamental that the gods were nothing but children of women. Pythagoras was thought to have been a son of God.

* Mackay.

Æsculapius is also thus represented. At times Apollo displaced Zeus, and became the central figure in Grecian mythology. The Greeks and Romans were continually elevating the most ordinary men into intermediate or subordinate divinities, and, for the want of something better, their intense search centred itself at times in Hero-worship. In Rome this idea was carried so far as to well nigh shock us. Jupiter was practically dethroned, in order that man might be deified. As atheistical France deified a prostitute, as Roman Catholics predicate divine attributes of the pope, as the modern Mohammedan deifies the sultan, and as modern humanitarians deify humanity, so Rome deified her emperors, though changing daily. The bald-headed and squint-eyed Caligula became a God.

In the startling language of Gibbon, the emperor of Rome was at once "a priest, an atheist, and a God."

Such is humanitarianism when carried to its logical extreme. Yet underneath, as with other forms of polytheism, there is something besides shadows. Here are symbol and prophecy. But these extreme views were not received by all or by most of the best minds of Greece. And no wonder, for deified Nature, deified heroes, and deified emperors never can satisfy the inquiries and wants of human souls. Souls are not content with toys, or make-believes, however gilded. Paganism answered no substantial purpose in these phases of it, and was never accepted by Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras, Pericles, or any of the thoughtful minds of antiquity, other than as an expe-

dient. It was endured simply for the want of something better. There may be some difficulty in drawing the line between this, which we have termed Grecian humanitarianism and Grecian spiritualism, but not so great as at first appears. There is an incompleteness in the system, but clear indications that these great minds were vigorously struggling towards the light in their search for the truth. Plato speaks of One, ideal or real, as we please to call him, who embodies all that is true in modern civilization. Let us designate that conception as spiritualism; better, theistic spiritualism. Why stagger at terms? This Super-human One that great philosopher called "Logos," "Reason," "Shadow of God," "Ideal Man," "Secondary God," "Name of God," "Looker on God," "Divine Image," "Eldest of Ideal Things," "Undivided Association of the Supreme," "God of God," "Light of Light."

How strikingly these terms recall the language of the apostle, "The effulgence of the Father's glory, and the express image of his nature." If one of these conceptions be spiritualism, why not the other, though not equally clear? Both Socrates and Plato looked for the divine manifestation in a human form. They believed it possible for God to become man, and in such condition visit the earth. These thoughts, to whatever source we trace them, made a deep impression upon the Grecian mind, and were subsequently reflected from the Roman. Cicero and Virgil employed very definite terms respecting a coming supernatural Man who would be able to satisfy the baffled intelligence of mankind.

Faith took shape in Seneca's mind thus: "No good man is holy without God." "The wise or ideal man is the equal with God." How the thoughts of these men of spiritual insight hovered about, though not fully comprehending the divine Logos! They were often in a kind of bewilderment — lost; but, in comparison with many others, how "delightfully lost"! The symbols and prophecies of the past were with these men, at length, to be realized. But pause — to find in the pagan world a higher and its highest type, we must go back.

Socrates anticipated Christian spiritualism, if we mistake not, more perfectly than any other, outside the Jewish prophets, until Jesus came. We fix attention for a moment upon the last scenes of his noble life. He had taken in his hand the poison which he was condemned to drink as a legal penalty for being true to truth, and then remarked, "It is certainly both lawful and right to pray to the gods that my departure thither may be happy; which therefore I pray, and so may it be." "And as he said this," says Plato, "he drank it off readily and calmly. . . . Having walked about, and saying that his limbs were growing heavy, he lay down upon his back, for the man so directed him. Afterwards Socrates touched himself and said, that when the poison reached his heart he should then depart. Later he uncovered himself, — for he had been covered over, — and said, — and they were his last words, — 'Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius; pay it, therefore, and do not neglect it.' 'It shall be done,' said Crito; 'but consider whether you have anything else to say.' To this question he gave no

reply; but shortly after he gave a convulsive movement, and the man covered him, and his eyes were fixed; and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes. This, Echecrates, was the end of our friend, a man, as we may say, the best of all his time that we have known, and, moreover, the most wise and just."

This, we hear it said, is the death of a pagan. But is there here no faith, no Christian theism even? Who was this Æsculapius, to whom Socrates looked in the last moments of his life? An ordinary physician? No. Yet a physician of whom it was reported that he could heal by the power of his word, or his touch, all manner of diseases that were brought to him. This Æsculapius was a god, the God of Restoration. He was the god who once used the blood flowing from his veins for the benefit of human beings. He was sometimes represented as the Light of the World; the one who gives repose; whose statue is the image and figure of Jove slightly modified. He was represented at other times as seated upon a throne, holding in one hand a sceptre, in the other the head of a *strangled serpent*. O, whence came these ideas? To this God-man, Physician, and Restorer, to this one who, more clearly than any other Grecian god prefigures the Christian's Physician, Friend, and Saviour, Socrates, the great and grand prophet of Greece, looked, and feeling that this one the most fully embodied what the race needed, and what his own soul longed for, spoke his name, and died. In this act there was no delirium, but an expression of the great beating and hunting heart of humanity. Here was Christianity — beclouded. If a

Christian be one who devotedly seeks God through a mediator, then we know not, if a Christian lived on earth prior to Christ, why Socrates was not a Christian. "Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis." *

But was Socrates faultless? Nay. Was Jacob? †

* Erasmus. † Appendix, A.

IV.

THE ISRAELITE AND ISHMAELITE.

THE Israelitish religion rests upon the same basis as Islamism. They both distinctly recognize subjection to an absolute will as the vital point in their faith.

Belief in monotheism and antagonism to idolatry constitute their natural strength. Whatever is original in the two systems belongs, however, to the Israelite. Its Jewish origin shows itself in all its better features. The name for its sacred writings, Koran, is borrowed for the biblical term *mikra*, reading. Scholten, though, as some think, in error respecting other statements, is quite right in saying that "what is true and good in Islamism was borrowed from Israel and Christianity." "Islam," says Carlyle, "is definable as a confused form of Christianity." It has been well termed "a heresy of Christianity." "We think," says Deutsch, "that Islam is neither more nor less than Judaism adapted to Arabia plus the apostolate of Jesus and Mahomet."

The Israelitish faith was, doubtless, partly natural;

and may it not also have been partly supernatural? partly inspired by nature; and may it not also have been in part, and in a peculiar manner, God-inspired? The basis of it is not distinctively Hebrew, but is, beyond question, natural and common to all the other Semitic nations. Let not this admission disturb the Christian believer. For were God to form a supernatural religion, he would not reject existing materials, did they answer his purpose. He is an economizer, and always practises rigidly upon the precept enjoined by his Son, "Gather up the fragments; let nothing be lost." Nothing slips undetected through his fingers. Truth is his wherever found, and he is not ashamed to use and own it.

Among all the Oriental nations there was a religious spirit that arose above the worship of nature. Bel among the Babylonians. Baal among the Ammonites and Moabites, Molech among the ancient Phœnicians and Carthaginians, Melkartht at Tyre and Carthage, and Jehovah, more properly Javah, of Israel, in each case indicates a conception of the unity of God distinct from, apart from, and above nature. The religious sympathy between these nations was so strong that the Israelites, notwithstanding the most resolute opposition of their prophets, constantly inclined to the worship of Baal and Molech.

The science of comparative philology, when applied to these Semitic religions, shows that they all had their "root originally in one and the same soil." *

The pure conceptions, which were reached in some individual instances, are seen in the old Canaanitish

* Appendix, B.

chieftains Melchizedeck and Abimelech, who worshipped the same God as Abraham; indeed, long before the patriarch reached the Land of Promise, and while his father was engaged in idol-making, the beautiful hills of Palestine were adorned with altars and smoking with sacrifices to the same One Being who is found in the original development of Brahminism.

Yet no one can look upon the Israelitish religion as a whole, not as frequently practised by the people, but as always taught by the prophets, and recorded in the sacred books, without discovering that apart from these natural or common elements there is also a marked difference in subsequent developments between it and all other Semitic religious systems.*

Such are the facts in the case. The only really difficult question is to account, upon naturalistic grounds, for this "disposition" and this advanced step of the people of Israel. Did Abraham really receive a special call, and were the prophets under special instruc-

* Scholten states this satisfactorily: "While most of the Semitic nations, in opposition to the effort to elevate God above nature as lord and governor, returned to the old nature-religion, with its grossly sensual worship of the divine, and others got no farther than to the conception of a deity, who, like a consuming fire, stood opposed to nature, and was to be appeased and propitiated by human sacrifices, there was developed among the Israelitish people, gradually and in constantly higher measure, in connection with a higher moral and religious disposition, the worship of God as a being who, though distinct from nature, is yet not opposed to it, and thus no longer demands human sacrifices, but obedience and moral consecration."

tion? If we can give an affirmative answer, our path is clear of difficulties, otherwise it is well beset.

The Israelites, first and last, were not philosophers. No people were less prepared to make religious discoveries; none, by dint of will or intellect, were more illy prepared to reduce religious haze and nebula to order and system. They did not make their religion; it seems to have made them. With obstinate tendencies towards idolatry, they were kept, not to a cold and scientific, but to a lofty and inspiring theism.

Two centuries before Christ there was written in Alexandria the book of the Wisdom of Solomon. It is as philosophical as anything in Jewish literature; still it is hardly a philosophy. The spirit that pervades it is metaphysical dualism. It holds to what may be termed a personal God and a divine emanation. But its divine emanation is an idea, not a person. It is that which "fills all things, permeates the souls of the holy, and is diffused like a luminous ether throughout the universe."

Some of the sentiments of this book are pure, lofty, and dignified. It anticipated many truths subsequently enunciated in the Gospels. A "hope full of immortality" (Wisd. iii. 4); "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God" (Wisd. iii. 1); "to know thee [O God] is perfect righteousness; yea, to know Thy power is the root of immortality" (Wisd. iii. 9), are beautiful and inspiring when viewed in the light of Christianity. The treatise, however, is indebted to Persian and Grecian thought, and especially to the utterances of Old Testament prophets, for its philosophy and for its sublime truth.

Of a later date is Philo, the contemporary of Jesus. His is the only name in Jewish history that is worthy of the title philosopher; and he is not original. He is Platonized through and through. His reasoning upon the nature of deity shows that he stood comparatively independent of the prophetic schools, but not of the schools of philosophy. "When we attempt to investigate the essence of the Absolute Being," he says, "we fall into an abyss of perplexity; and the only benefit derived from such researches is the conviction of their absurdity." His God is not, therefore, the God of Abraham, but is an abstract being, who has no personality. Philo does not, however, stop in this state of despair; but, like a true Jew of the divine school, he says, "Unable to see God himself, we may at least hope to see his image — the most holy Logos, in whom is comprehended the most perfect of sensible things — the universe." But here again Philo's Logos is never lifted from the region of abstractions. He was perhaps the father of a modern notion that "each man is the true Messiah and Saviour of himself." We repeat, Philo, in laying any claims to philosophy, stands in the Jewish commonwealth almost alone.*

The prophets and Jewish teachers were not, by the slightest pretence on their part, philosophers, nor can we institute any such claim for them. They indulge in no speculations about God. He is represented as creating and ruling. He is the "I am," and the Jehovah, — the coming One. He is such and such, and there the prophets stop. Of his generic nature

* Appendix, C.

and substance they never speak. Whatever may have been the tendency of the common people towards idolatry, polytheism, images of God and image-worship, their sacred books and their inspired prophets countenance nothing of the kind, but severely condemn all such approaches. The Hebrew prophets attempted to explain God no more than a child attempts to explain his father. Yet to this sublime doctrine of theism the Hebrew nationality, under the personal influence of their prophets and the teachings of their sacred books, in the midst of polytheism and idolatry, has clung during a period dating two thousand years before, and extending to two thousand years since, their exile. Israel stands in this respect without a parallel.

From the God-idea of the Israelite we turn, for a moment, to that of the Ishmaelite. The first historic notices of the ancient nomadic tribes of the Arabian peninsula find them worshippers of the stars, the powers of nature, sacred stones, imaginary angels, and images. But there was, doubtless, among them a prehistoric religious epoch. It discloses itself in the worship of Allahtaala, and points to a more distant monothedism. It can hardly be questioned that the stars, the powers of nature, and the like, were merely looked upon at first as mediators between the Invisible and man. They were waymarks in the journey to the Infinite. In their influence they played the part of a talisman. But thoughts of the Unknown One at length confused the minds of these early Arabs, and they paid their devotions and offered their sacrifices, not to the

"All," but directly and exclusively to invented, mediating, and deified things. From this state of idolatry they were first effectually aroused by Mohammed. He was no ordinary man, but one of the greatest; he was religious, not ambitious. Those who knew him best named him "Al Amin," the Faithful. His purpose was to revive the religion of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Like Zoroaster,* Sakya-muni, and Martin Luther, Mohammed was a protestant reformer. And like them, he, too, was no sham or false man. "A false man form a religion!" exclaims Carlyle. "Why, a false man cannot build a brick house."

He was born at Mecca (571), of a reputable family, belonging to the Koreish tribe. After his first public announcements, he suffered the various reverses of all reformers. He at length overcame the prejudices of his friends, organized troops, conquered Mecca (630), and made the Kaaba the sanctuary of the new religion.

Islam (submission to God) is the word which embodies the doctrine of Mohammed, whence also his followers take the name Moslems. Nothing is truer or sublimer than this underlying principle of their faith.

* Zerdusht, or, as the Greeks call him, Zoroaster, found the Persians worshippers of idols. His mission was that of a reformer. His religion was a simple form of theism. He recognized but one God, who was Creator, Preserver, and Ruler. He taught that the divine one is without form, and invisible; that he is an immense light, and that "his mercies are boundless as his being." The followers of this Persian reformer have been called the Puritans of the Old World. They came to hate idolatry bitterly. "They taught their children,' says Herodotus, "how to ride, shoot, and speak the truth."

"If this be *Islam*," asks Goethe, "do we not all believe in Islam?" The first public act of the reformer was to abolish idols and idol-worship. At the same time he pointed the people to the one Allah. His purpose was not merely to destroy, but to build up. In these acts he was no coward, but full of daring. "This wild man of the Desert, with his wild, sincere heart, earnest as death and life, with his great flashing natural eyesight, had seen into the kernel of the matter. Idolatry is nothing; these wooden idols of yours, 'ye rub them with oil and wax, and the flies stick onto them;' these are wood, I tell you! They can do nothing. 'Allah Abkar. God is great.'"

But Mohammed's philosophy is not so good as his heart. His Allah is enthroned on high, and in the strictest isolation from the world.* Thus, by separating God as the abstract Supreme Being from the world, Mohammedanism, as Scholten states, leaves no place for the doctrine of God's immanence. God's spirit no longer dwells in man. The divine revelations remain purely mechanical, with no natural, or, in the true sense, supernatural point of connection in man. Hence there can be no enduring prophetism, which is the fundamental principle of Judaism and Christianity. From this separation between God and man, the Mohammedan doctrine of predestination, in distinction from the Christian, is abstract and fatalistic. Man has no free activity in which God's power and life are glorified, but is merely a passive instrument of a high-

* Our friends of the opposition are right, but perhaps forget themselves when they call Mohammedanism "the Unitarianism of the East."

er power. To true moral independence, therefore, the Moslem does not attain. His religion, as a whole, is legal and external, therefore cold, intolerant, and exclusive; "and when Islamism, led by excited passion and a heated imagination, disregarded the sanctity of marriage, and held up as a reward before the faithful Moslem, a paradise characterized by sensual enjoyment, it missed at once the deep moral and spiritual character of Christianity."

Still, Mohammedanism, though a system of error, has done not a little for the cause of truth. It has always held to some tenets which are common to both Jewish and Christian believers. "It was wrong, and yet not wholly wrong." "Your salutation in Paradise," it said, "shall be *Salem*" — Peace. "Ye shall sit on seats facing one another. All grudges shall be taken away out of your hearts." Such expressions would be an adorning to any religion. Prayer, hospitality, and benevolence also occupy a prominent place in the Islam faith. Belief in the future life, the Jewish-Parsee form of the resurrection, the final judgment, future rewards and punishments, are essential doctrines in the Mohammedan creed. Belief in communications from the unseen Lord to the pure and good, though contrary to the spirit of their philosophy, is never called in question by the followers of Mohammed. Indeed, they teach that God, from the earliest times, revealed himself to some privileged men, as to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus; and of those thus favored, Mohammed is regarded as the greatest and last of the prophets. In him the revelations of God are thought to find their culmination and their end.

The Mohammedan soldier exclaimed, "God is one, and man is his minister to do his will on earth. Mahomet is his prophet." He needed no additional incentive. He swept onward in his startling conquests. Those "dusky millions have felt daily a power in this watchword. Nightly the watchmen of Cairo, when they cry, 'Who goes?' with the response will hear, 'Allah abkar, Islam.'"

But with Mohammed and the visible government of the caliph the divine manifestation ends. No new prophet can arise. God is to remain unobserving, distant, cold. The Mohammedan will henceforth worship his faithful mare and the desert.* The new history with which Mohammed was to have the world begin, admits no additional step of religious progress. Their clarion shouts have already lost their startling effect upon the plains of Arabia. Here, in a system that evokes no love, which impels submission, which is well characterized by the epithet, "a pantheism of force," end the triumphs of the Crescent. No further or closer connection with the divine, no atonement, no universal kingdom inspire the people. An early history of conquests, based upon an intense belief in God, and in a divinely-inspired man, so intense, clear, and simple, as to leave scarce any room for heresy or schism, and a future history of defeats are what remain. It is a "fatal legacy." It now acts "as a gradual decay in every nation over which it dominates." Here is witnessed the fact that a pure theism, without the power or possibility of manifestation, cannot live on earth. Such negation shocks human nature beyond

* Appendix, D.

endurance, saps the foundations of belief, and opens the door to practical atheism.

Long since Mohammedanism had found its grave but for the imaginary connection between God and the Sultan. In this earthly sovereignty remains, for a while a central, natural, and religious power. As a shadow of that which resembles the truth, it affords a temporary support. When this falls or is questioned, Islamism is no more.

We now pass to the personal God, and Messiah-idea of the Jewish faith, which draw a broad line between Judaism and Islamism. The faith of the Israelite was made, first and last, to centre itself in a personal deity, who is ever present with his children, and who interests himself in all the affairs of mortals. The early prophets, without for an instant losing sight of a pure theism, have, at the same time, clear visions of a King, who shall be the "manifestation of God," his perfect image, the Son of Man, the Son of God, not the human Sultan, but the divine Deliverer. Isaiah has given the world a vision, which, for clearness and sublimity, upon grounds of the coldest criticism, finds no equal among mortals. Amid scenes of terrible conflicts and utter darkness he saw in the distance a Light. He saw the joy of the people, heard their shouts, and depicted their deliverance. He saw the armor of war laid aside, the image of Peace succeeding, the light expanding, becoming more and more intense, and the darkness on every hand retiring. He gazed upon the wonderful scenes — they were transformed, and there stood before him a little child, but one upon whose shoulders the government of the world was placed.

These prophetic visions produced impressions upon the Jewish heart, which for ages were deeper than any other, and which have never been entirely obliterated.

It is a remarkable fact that the Jews, though professedly strict monotheists, never attacked Christ or his disciples upon the ground of polytheism. They looked, in common, for a divine Messiah. "Make us gods who shall go before us," the people demanded of Aaron. A deliverer who should be a God, or a Son of God, was the strongest and deepest feeling in the heart of every Jewish patriot. The common people differed, it is true, in their opinions as to the character of the Mediator. Some looked for a half-human and half-divine King. Others expected to see him appear in the form of a bloody conqueror. This was especially the case after the Maccabean conquests. Nothing is more natural, perhaps, than for the nobility and courage of Judas Maccabeus, before whom the vast armies of the Seleucidæ disappeared like morning mist, to furnish the Jew with an ideal Messiah. "This vision of the warrior archangel was thenceforward ever to float before their eyes." The masses were never quite able to understand how the empire of Messiah could be established by teaching, instead of fighting. Josephus thought he recognized the Divine One in Vespasian.

But there were others still who looked for a spiritual and divine reformer, a Saviour of the world. Such, when he appeared, were satisfied with Jesus of Nazareth.

These expectations, in various forms, were rife, not only among the school of the prophets, but were

talked of elsewhere. His name was heard more frequently than any other in the schools of Hillel, Philo, and among the Essenes. The duty of every true Hebrew was to consider it possible for the Messiah to appear in himself. These convictions, it may be noticed, were in part the product of the prophetic writings, and in part the prophecies of humanity. As in case of the theism of Israel, so these Messianic longings and expectations had their natural and widespread basis, as well as their supernatural and special development. God fosters what is common to human nature, instead of inventing what is foreign to it. He is no more a friend to one part of his work than he is to another. If nature, which is God's child, and which he loves, were strong enough, he would allow her to produce, without interference, the Supernatural. "Natural," were it possible, would take the place of Supernatural "Selection" and "Development." God is jealous, not of nature, though of man. Yet as things are constituted, the supernatural is the natural carried beyond natural possibility; but there is no change of directions.

The root-faith, in the subject before us, is belief in a mediating and divine Prince. This is the product of a common understanding among men. No religion can be a universal religion that does not recognize it, and God would not "gather up the fragments," did he not employ it as a part foundation of his special providential and universal superstructure, whatever that may be.

The same statements apply also to the Israelitish idea of sacrificial atonement. There is a natural and

universal basis, known and acted upon long before special revelations in the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as a supernatural, ordained and symbolic superstructure. Had he received no special directions, Abel would, nevertheless, have offered in sacrifice "the firstlings of his flock."

The Jews represent their God as ordering sacrifices. Why object? May it not have been a divine recognition of a human necessity? The sacrifice of human beings, even, was not, among the people of Israel, altogether unknown.* But, excepting in great emergencies, it had not the divine approval. † Shall the Jewish faith, on account of its sacrifices, be condemned, as entirely of human invention?

Take away the principle of sacrifice from any people, or any religion, leaving no substitute, there would of necessity be a void so awful that conscience must be violated or permitted to fill it. Human nature has remained too long essentially the same in this respect to be revolutionized by merely natural expedients.

But, leaving speculation, return to the simple fact of the Israelitish faith in the Messiah. The belief was wide-spread. In common, the Jew and Samaritan looked for one greater than their father Abraham. At his advent the Jew expected to see his nation suddenly "exalted to new bloom and lustre." When Pompey entered the Holy of Holies, he was surprised to find no image. He did not understand that this sacred apartment of the temple was in waiting for its true

* Ex. xxxii. 27–29; Num. xxv. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 1–14.

† Deut. xii. 31; Jer. xix. 5, 6.

and divine Lord and Master. With a half-glance one cannot fail to discover that the entire Jewish theocracy is made up from ideas of sacrifice, atonement, and a coming Messiah.

Scripture figures and types are otherwise meaningless. There is, upon any other supposition, no unity or force in Old Testament history, or prophecy. Introduce these elements, and there is one manifest object from Adam to the origin of the Jewish commonwealth; from the prophets until "Behold the Lamb of God!" broke from the lips of John the Baptist. All incidental prophecies, histories, and biographies manifestly bear upon their surface a divine One. In him all sacrifices, rites, ceremonies, and types find their common centre and complete fulfilment. This explains those outbursts of feeling in the Jewish nation which occasionally knew no bounds. A wild "blaze of prophetic anticipation" at times swept over the people. It was the inspiring promise of his coming which, in hours of adversity, brought every Jewish harp from the willows, and evoked their happiest songs of praise. The united anthems of the prophetic books, in force and beauty, will never be equalled. "I see him, but not nigh. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Break forth into singing, and cry aloud. The Lord of Hosts is thy name. The Lord of the whole earth shall he be called. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

The concluding books of the Old Testament are less inspiring, but have an intensity of meaning rarely met

with elsewhere. These "short, convulsive sobs of a dying dispensation contain, in their broken and pathetic eloquence, many gleams of glorious hopes and splendid predictions, like the beautiful visions that cheer the death-bed of the sad and weary."

The Jews of to-day need not detain us. Their history is a sad one. Two thousand years ago they said the Messiah was then coming. They made extensive preparations to receive him. To-day they say he has not come. They have lost heart, and fall to worshipping Dollars. The essence of true worship with the Jew is no longer morality. The deep feeling of dependence on God and the spontaneity of religious life are, among this people, rarely met with. Faith in the Most High, who, enthroned in heaven, "puts purity into the closet, and allows the most intimate communion with the true worshipper," no longer characterizes this nation of hucksters. What next they scarcely know. That He *will come* has been through history a bond of union, but this to-day yields to a bond of mutual and financial interest.

Alas for the descendants of Abraham! Islam sees God in the ruling sultan, and worships a horse. Israel trembles upon the verge of atheism, and consecrates an altar to Mammon.

V.

THE ABORIGINAL AMERICAN.

A REVIEW or comparison of religious thoughts would not answer its purpose did we leave from our account, as is often done, the original inhabitants of the American continent. Here were peoples and nations numbering in the aggregate from ten to twenty million souls, and speaking six hundred different dialects. Here was mankind presented under various phases, from brutal abasement up to at least a limited civilization. At the northern extremity of America were the pygmy Esquimaux, a trifle above four feet in height, and at the southern the Patagonian giants of seven feet. Here humanity has unquestionably existed in such numbers and of such character as to demand attention, if we correctly settle what are some of the religious ideas which are innate or common to the race.

The Indians, who occupied both sides of the Alleghany Mountains, upon the arrival of the English colonists possessed the same general characteristics. They loved their respective tribes, treated their wives cruelly,

and their children with indifference. The grand element in the Indian character is stoicism. The Indian is gloomy, stern, severe, and is a stranger to mirth and laughter. He desires, above all things, to be let and left alone. He has, however, deep religious convictions. His Supreme Being is the Great, sometimes called the Good Spirit. There were tribes — for instance the Natchez, near the Mississippi — who worshipped the sun, and erected temples upon whose altars, as in the Jewish temples, they kept a perpetual fire.

Others — for illustration the Araucanians of South America, who, in true courage, in manliness and energy of character, take precedence of all the original American nations, and who maintained their independence against the best troops and the best generals of Spain for two hundred years, while they intensely believed in a Supreme Being, have neither temples, nor idols, nor religious rites. The Indians generally, if not universally, believed in a future state; their descriptions make it resemble the heaven of Mohammed.

The good and brave, according to their belief, enter beautiful and eternal hunting-grounds; the wicked fall into the hands of a relentless master. Their religious thought and spirit threw coloring over every object of nature. Theirs was a kind of theistic naturalism. The melodious names they gave to mountains, lakes, and rivers are suggestive. Their "Smile of the Great Spirit," "The First Good," and the "First Fair," enthrone truth, and hint to us the past poetico-religious character even of the unsettled and savage

tribes of America. Of the settled and partially civilized nations, we call attention, especially to two.*

The largest empire in the early history of America was the Peruvian. Her people were unwarlike, and devoted themselves to art and agriculture. The government was an absolute despotism based upon a strict theocracy. This feature mitigated largely the rigors of its constitutional despotism. The temporal sovereign of Peru was, like the monarchs of Egypt and Japan, the supreme pontiff. He also assumed, like the emperor of China and the Catholic priest, the title "Father of the People." He was regarded as the descendant and representative of the great deity, the Sun, who was supposed to inspire the pontiff's councils and speak through his orders and decrees. The race of the ruling Incas was held sacred, and their claim to celestial origin seems, by the people, to have been implicitly believed.

The founder of the line of the Incas is to the Peruvians what Buddha is to the Buddhists. Not far from eleven hundred of our era Manco Capac, with his wife, and Mama Ocello, his sister, appeared as strangers upon the banks of the Lake Titicaca. Doubtless by some fortune of the sea, they or their ancestors had drifted from the shores of China. They brought with them the principles of a higher civilization and purer

* This whole question of an earlier American civilization, destroyed by its own corruptions or by the northern and more barbarous Indian tribes, which swept down from the north, closely analogous, perhaps, to the condition of Europe in mediæval times, is intensely interesting, and will, it is hoped, invite and receive ere long the attention deserved.

religion than those of the native Peruvians. They were taken to be "children of the sun;" were believed in; then worshipped.

How naturally and fondly humanity worships a deity in human form! The people of Lystra exclaimed, when they saw the deeds of Paul and Barnabas, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men!" and prepared their garlands and oxen for sacrifice.*

Manco Capac, like Sakya-muni, Zoroaster, and Odin, was a religious reformer. Like Quetzalcoalt of the Mexicans, the Bochica of the Muyscas in New Grenada, and the Camarara of the Brazilians, so Manco Capac was looked upon by the Peruvians as God-sent. May he not have been? Whose are the world's reformers, her teachers, prophets, and workers of miracles? May not the same providence which sent Paul and Barnabas to Lystra have also sent Capac and Ocello to the shores of Peru? Who governs the affairs of this world, God, man, or chance?

The Peruvians, like the Chinese, worshipped the sun, the moon, the evening star, the spirit of thunder, and the rainbow. To these deities they had temples erected in Cusco, as the Chinese have in Pekin.† Their sacrifices consisted of those objects of their own industry which were most highly prized — fruit, grain, and animals.

The story of Manco Capac and Mama Ocello, and the beneficence of the ruling Incas, is to-day fresh in

* Acts xiv. 11–13.

† The Chinese festival, observed at the summer solstice, resembles, in a marked degree, the grand solar festival of Peru.

the memories of the Peruvians. The accounts have been handed down from father to son with fondest admiration. Abraham is no better remembered among the Jews.

Three centuries of humiliation and misfortune have not blasted their hopes. They will not rest, nor will the Indians of the territory of Quito throw off their mourning dress of black until their Incas, this race of the sons of God, return for their relief and restoration. Suffering humanity, thou shouldst have a universal Restorer! *

Next to the Peruvian ranked the early Mexican empire. Probably not far from 500 of the Christian era the Toltecks first occupied the Mexican tablelands.

The ancient towns and cities visited by Stevenson, which have been for ages partially covered by dense tropical growths of vegetation, and which point to an earlier civilization than that existing at the time of the Spanish conquests, were undoubtedly of Tolteck construction. Five or six centuries later the Toltecks were subdued by the Aztecs, or Mexicans proper, who upon the ruins of this earlier and higher civilization erected their own.

When Cortes made his conquest, the eighth of the Montezuman line of monarchs ruled a territory of one

* The barbarous murder of the Inca Atahualpa by Pizarro is annually represented in the form of a tragedy. "In this performance," says Mr. Stevenson, "the grief of the Indians is so natural, though excessive, their songs so plaintive, and the whole is such a scene of distress, that I never witnessed it without mingling my tears with theirs."

hundred and thirty thousand square miles, containing two million subjects. The government was under an arbitrary aristocracy of priests and nobles.

Their temples of worship were upon the same architectural plan as that of Belus at Babylon. They had a complicated system of theology. It was unique in many particulars, but in others strongly resembled that of the Persian fire-worshippers, and in still other respects it reminds one of the faith of the Hindoos of the Ganges. They recognized one Supreme God, the "omniscient" and "invisible." Yet, like all other nations, they sought relief in mediations and incarnations. Hailzilopotchli and Tezcatlipoca were the chief deities to whom sacrifices were offered. These are approachable, because they are gods born of women.

But the people were not satisfied, and, like the Egyptian and Buddhist, the Greek and Roman, the Goth and Vandal, they invented other divinities still more human. They desired a being who could walk in their midst, heal and comfort them, and in the hem of whose garment there should be virtue. Quetzalcoalt came, and answered the conditions, and inaugurated the Golden Age of Mexico. He was probably a deified person, like Zoroaster, Buddha, and Odin. He was, according to their accounts, subsequently expelled from the empire by a superior God. But the Aztecs, year after year, looked and longed for his return. At first they mistook Cortes for this returning deity. How much this had to do with their conquest, it is not easy to estimate. The Aztec religion appears to have been cruel and savage beyond measure. Women

and children, as well as men, were mercilessly sacrificed. The highest estimates of victims (human) throughout the empire reach fifty thousand annually. At the dedication of one of their great temples the procession of victims extended for the distance of two miles.

A certain ceremony in honor of Tezcatlipoca, who ranked next to the Supreme and Invisible One, is to us painfully interesting and suggestive. This deity is represented as a man, faultless in form and beauty, and endowed with perpetual youth.

A captive youth, remarkable for personal beauty, was selected to represent him, to whom divine honors were paid for a year. Then, amid imposing and solemn ceremonies, he was publicly executed — an atonement for the people.

The stories of these repeated tragedies are appalling. They show what fearful and bloody coverings are sometimes thrown over truths which are fundamental to the race. This young man, of faultless form, of perhaps thirty and three years, made the representation of deity, the God-man of the empire, and led forth as a sacrifice for the people, awakens in the heart of humanity a thought which, when once awakened, never slumbers.*

* Appendix, E.

ESSENTIAL THEOLOGY.

I.

THE GOD-IDEA.

WE have selected the foregoing types of religious ideas, not because they are exhaustive, or because they better illustrate our purpose than other forms of religious development, but because they answer the end in view as well as any other, and also because these especially have been attended of late with not a little general interest and discussion.

The following facts, in view of the ground canvassed, will, we think, be readily conceded — first, that Brahminism and Buddhism, Greek and Roman mythology, the Israelitish and Ishmaelitish faiths, also the aboriginal religions of America, together with the beliefs of other religions, indirectly alluded to, present, as their fundamental notion, an invisible and unapproachable deity; second, that they give evidence of a constant search after the Unseen, and that, often baffled, they introduce various existing or imaginary objects as mediators; third, that a divine man is the grand ideal towards which the inquirers most fondly turn; and fourth, that connected with this ideal man, or otherwise, is the principle of sacrificial atonement.

With these facts before us, we pause in the delineation of the world's religions, and gathering data here and there, group them around the points already established.

"Two things are necessary," says Theodore Parker, "to render religion possible; namely, a religious faculty in man, and God out of man, as an object of that religious faculty."

"That the divine is recognized by man," says Lewis, "is proof that the divine exists."

"The causal instincts of the intellect," says James Martineau, "the solemn suspicion of the conscience, the ideal passions of the imagination, the dependent self-renunciation of the affections, are all, we believe, so many lines of attraction to the same Infinite Object."

"Though the Absolute," says Herbert Spencer, cannot in any manner or degree be known, in the strict sense of knowing, yet we find that its positive existence is a necessary datum of consciousness; that so long as consciousness continues, we cannot for an instant rid it of this datum; and that thus the belief which this datum constitutes, has a higher warrant than any other whatever."

Not unlike the foregoing is Spinoza's "finite thinking," suggesting an "infinite thinking," Fichte's "particular ego," suggesting a "universal ego," and Emerson's "myself," suggesting "another self."

That which follows from these undeniable postulates is certainly true — that the moment we predicate a religious nature or consciousness of man, that moment God is recognized as an established fact.

Jacobi correctly taught that belief in God is a primal instinct of the soul.* "Not to know God, and be a brute," he forcibly remarks, "are one and the same thing."

Cicero and Philo likewise make the test of manhood to rest upon this recognition of the Infinite One.

No man can be really an atheist, though many are antitheists. "That God is," exclaimed Cato, "all nature cries aloud." We are aware, however, that the claim has been recently started, though not by any weighty authorities, that the Lepchas of Northern India, the natives of Australia, some of the tribes of Central Africa, the Caffres, the South American Indians, and some few others, have no religion, and no idea of a Creator, or a God.

But these special pleaders are often their own betrayers. A little further investigation will introduce the chief of some of these tribes as the representative God of the people, while in other cases the deity is the medicine-man.

And more than this, in these very instances we see merely a corruption of a purer faith, a lapsing from an earlier theism into what we may term a degrading mediatorialism. Of a similar character was the deification of the Roman Emperors, the Sultans of Tur-

* "Naturally as the new-born draws nourishment from its mother's breast," says Jacobi, "so the heart of man takes hold on God in surrounding nature."

Says Lichtenberg, "Faith in a God is instinct. It is natural to men, just as going on two legs is natural. With many it is modified, and with many it is stifled; yet it exists, and is indispensable to the (internal) symmetry of consciousness."

key, and the Pharaohs of Egypt. In other instances we have not sufficient data to enable us to pass anything like a final judgment, in opposition to so much rebutting evidence. The weight of testimony is all in the opposite direction. Ancient philosophy in its various forms, and especially in its purer and higher flights, sought ever to throw itself into the arms of the unknown God.

Modern philosophy and science appear in many features atheistic, but really are not. The God-idea is so overwhelming that it pervades the positivist school, including all its phases, from Comte to Renan. As soon as the mind of man, cultivated or not, rejects the popular idea of God, whatever that may be, it proceeds at once to manufacture another. The "Grand Etre" of Comte, the "Unknowable" of Spencer, are but names that mean God. Were Darwin and Huxley professed atheists — they are far from it — still the suggestions involved in "Development" and "Life Stuff" are inevitable. Voltaire would have no Jehovah, but he worshipped the god Truth. Singular as it may appear, it was this same Voltaire who said, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent one."

France dethroned the Almighty, but rid herself of a deity she could not, and Reason was deified. Night was one of the rationalistic or speculative gods of Egypt,* and "Nichts" was a god of Hegel.

* That Egypt was not destitute of a purer Theistic Spiritualism than "Night" would indicate, may be seen in the following article of religion recently discovered in a coffin of very ancient date: —

"I am the Most Holy, the Creator of all that replenishes the earth, and of the earth itself, habitation of mortals. I am the Prince of the infinite ages. I am the great and mighty

"The materialist," as some French writer says, "sees God as reflected in elemental nature, the pantheist as reflected in the organic and animate creation, the theist as reflected in man." But see him all must, in some way or other, or, at least, indisputable evidence of him.

We appeal to a more general class of facts. Dr. Livingstone says that all the newly-discovered tribes in the interior of Africa "have clear ideas of the Supreme God." "There is," he says, "no necessity for telling the most degraded of these people of the existence of God, or of a future state, for these facts are universally admitted."

The Bakwaens scouted the idea of ever having been without clear conceptions on these subjects. The people of Tarouba speak of a deity who is the "Owner of Heaven." Roman Catholic Jesuits from the earliest dates have found deeply-rooted religious ideas in their first visits to the darkest corners of the earth, and the most desolate islands of the sea. The early belief of the Scandinavians, the Germans, and the Gallic tribes rest upon the basis of a Supreme Being, the One and Invisible, as firmly as those of later civilizations. Nor has the God-idea always been vague and indefinite. The Fatherhood of the deity constantly and almost everywhere appears as a leading idea in paganism. In the Rig

God, the Most High, shining in the midst of the careering stars, and of the armies which praise me over thy head. It is I who chastise and who judge the evil doers and the persecutors of godly men. I discover and confound the liars. I am the All-seeing Judge and Avenger; the guardian of my laws is the land of righteousness."

Veda we find this petition: "May the Father of Men be favorable to us!" Hesiod addresses Jupiter as "Father of Gods and Men." Minucius Felix well observes that "even they who make Jove supreme, mistake indeed in the name, but agree in the thing, the *one* notion of an Almighty God."

Thus Homer addresses Zeus as the "most great and glorious Father." "What would life be to me," exclaims Marcus Aurelius, "in a world without a God and Providence?" Horace speaks of a "Father and Guardian of the human race." "He, the glorious Parent," says Seneca, "tries the good man and prepares him for himself." "They [men] are the children," says the Talmud, "of their Father who is in heaven."

Not only the idea of Fatherhood, but God's willingness to reveal his will though priests and chosen ones has been well nigh universally believed. The Egyptians taught that the sacred books of Hermes were God-given. Thus also the Babylonians and Assyrians regarded the Eight Books, the Egyptians the Forty-two, and the Persians held in equal veneration the Zendavesta. Confucius and the Chinese appealed to the Five Kings, Buddhists to the Tripitaka, and the Scandinavians to the Voluspa, as the voice of God.

That God is such as to hear prayer has been so generally believed that it may be classed among the universal religious ideas. The view finds unquestioned confirmation in Chinese, Brahmin, Buddhist, and Grecian literature and theology. The noble prayer of Shun, the supplications in Rig Veda, and the devotions of Buddhists, are coming to be familiar to all.* Peri-

* Appendix F.

cles and Demosthenes often commenced and concluded their speeches with prayer. Homer was ever weaving prayers into his epics. He significantly called them Jove's daughters, feeble and deformed, lame and slant-eyed themselves, but as mediators between heaven and earth, he believed they constituted irresistible agencies. Socrates was wont to rebuke those men of his time who never looked to God for assistance, but who relied, instead, upon human weakness. "He who prayeth to God," said Plato, "and trusteth in his good favor, shall do well."

That the Great Spirit of the early American tribes was regarded as a Prayer-hearer is not questioned. Beautifully and forcibly did this find illustration while Mayhew was preaching for the first time to the Nantucket Indians. "This God of whom you tell us," exclaimed an Indian mother, with full heart and tearful eye, "is the God I called upon to save my child." *

* It is the opinion of many of the best informed upon this subject, that no man has ever lived who has not prayed. Says President Walker, "You may find men without morality and without affection; you may find, doubtless, deniers, scoffers, and blasphemers; but where can be found one who never prays? I do not think I should be very extravagant," he continues, "were I to assert that it is as impossible to find a man who never prayed as to find one who never shed a tear."

"Never yet," says Guthrie, "did traveller find a nation upon the earth but prayed in some form, to some god, or demon. Said Plutarch, nearly two thousand years ago (he was one of the best informed of pagans), "Survey the face of the globe, you may find whole tribes and nations without fortified places, without letters, and without a magistracy, but never one without altars and prayers."

But we need not longer dwell upon specific cases, since illustrations of our position are so universal.*

It would thus seem, upon review, that every human soul is more or less "aflame with God." Men have not been able to escape "the broodings of the Oversoul." The "One," "Almighty," "Incomprehensible," "Hidden God," "Ammon" of one portion of Egypt, of another portion Cneph, the "God unbegotten," Ormisda, the supreme deity of the ancient Parsees, Baal of Chaldea, Remphan of Canaan, Homerca of the Babylonians, Syrians, and Phœnicians, the "One God" of the early Chinese monarchs, who have given as clear recognition of the authority and personality of God as can be found outside the Hebrew Scriptures, the "Invisible" represented by Odin among the Northmen, the "Great Spirit" of the North American Indians, the "Sun God" of the ancient Peruvians, the "Greater than many is the One" of the Druids, the "Source of Light" among the Persians, the "Invisible Time," the "Existence without Bounds," the "Eternal Night," the "Brahm of India," the "All" of Platonism, the "Allah" of the Mussulmans, and the "Jeho-

* Were it necessary, it could be shown that other orthodox views of Jehovah were entertained. Some of his attributes, even those which occasion modern thinkers much perplexity, are more than hinted at. Take the attribute of Trinity for illustration. Plato's trinity is familiar to all. Lao-tse, the rationalist of China, says, "Reason has produced one, one produced two, two produced three, and three make all things."

Unity in plurality was held as fundamental in Egyptian theology. The ancient symbol of the deity, in both Egypt and Hindostan, was a triangle with an eye in the centre; also an image with three faces.

vah" of the Jews, in fact, the deities of every form of polytheism, pantheism, or theism, show that God has stamped his indelible signature upon all human hearts, which no elevation or degradation can by any possibility efface; that more or less perfect have been human conceptions respecting him; and that mankind will never rest from their labors and search until God manifests himself in some such form as can by them be apprehended.

II.

MEDIATOR.

"EVERY nation," says Mackay, "that has advanced beyond the most elementary conceptions, has felt the necessity of an attempt to fill the chasm, real or imaginary, separating man from God." Hence the mediator-idea is scarcely less general than the God-idea.

Without this principle of mediation all things are felt to be enveloped in inexplicable mystery and difficulty. How can the Supreme Being reveal himself and create a universe, are questions that have given rise to riddles innumerable, and strangely bewildering. Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Cousin, and all modern "mediatorial" schemers have diligently sought solutions. Platonism, Gnosticism, Hindooism, modern German, and American pantheism, are but repeated efforts to give *form* to the formless. All image-worship was likewise well begun. Were there nothing better, all men, from necessity, would to-day become image-worshippers.

On a very ancient Egyptian temple at Sais we find

the following significant and impressive inscription: "I am whatever is, was, and will be. No mortal has ever raised the veil that conceals me." Yet the Egyptians have been far from satisfied with such confession of religious faith. They have from almost the earliest historic times felt that something sacred lay beneath every visible object; every object was a divine manifestation, and therefore sacred. It was not inconsistent with their belief reverently to worship the bull, cat, and alligator. It certainly is not inconsistent that these objects awaken the worshipful attitude of the soul.

"A black cat, stealing by us in twilight," says Hegel, "brings over our minds an impression as of something preternatural. "Let us pray," seems to be inscribed upon every existence.

Search for mediations and mediators, often dissatisfied and disappointed, as already stated, best explains the lapse of so many nations from monotheism into polytheism, and we may add pantheism also. All fire-worship, whether in the Old or New World, rests substantially upon the same basis, and signifies the same thought. Men looked about in nature for the purest, brightest, and most incorruptible thing to symbolize deity; they found it, or thought they did, in fire, and adored it.

The Bogles and Kelpies of Scotland, the Trolls of Denmark, the Nixes of early Germany, the charms of Fetich worship, the *Life* of the Egyptians, the *Light* of the Persians, the *Beauty* of the Greeks, the ancestor worship of China and New Zealand, the intercessor worship of the Roman Catholic, the wor-

ship of the graves of saints among the Mohammedans, the adoration paid to the Rain-makers of Central Africa, and to the Medicine-man among the North American Indians, are efforts more or less perfect and significant to satisfy the longing hearts of mankind, and find something to span the mysterious and perplexing gulf that is felt to intervene, dividing the finite from the infinite. This is the principle also which lies beneath all materialism, be it that of Chu-Hi of China, Hæckel of Germany, or Huxley of England. It is that which gives life and interest to every form of ancient or modern naturalism. Nay, more; there has been no system of philosophy among men which does not expect a bridegroom and a bridal ceremony.

The ultimate aim in every case is to find the something that forms the union between the divine and human, thought and matter. The difference is, that some of the systems are furnished with lamps only; others, in addition, have wicks and oil. This mediator-idea is the basis of "man's old eternal want," always old and always new. It explains why the philosophers flocked after Paul in Athens, and all classes after John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea. Western polytheism sought to exalt men into gods, and Eastern pantheism sought to identify God with his works. The end is the same; the methods differ.

The shepherds of Arcadia, regarding Pan as the representative god, listened to brook, breeze, and tree to hear him pipe his reed.

All these ancient methods of mediation between God and man, though so various in form, may be

reduced to two — action and contemplation. The end sought is a perfect life, or a perfect ideal. If one form of mediation is not embraced, men will, of necessity, resort to another. Belief in something to mediate between humanity and the Universal Heart there must be.

Consider one of the highest and purest types, the "word," the symbol employed by Plato, Philo, and St. John for illustration. It is deeply suggestive. A word stands for the invisible idea which it represents. The classical Logos is a thoroughly generic term, and may include the idea of Universal Being. It signifies reason as well as speech. "Vach," the active form of Brahma, signifies "speech." "Honover," by whom Ormuzd creates, signifies, in the Persian religion, "word." The Chinese teach that the world was created, not by the Infinite God, but by the "Primordial Reason," or "Word."

The selection of this term seems, upon a moment's reflection, remarkably fitting. A thought is conceived in the mind, it struggles to utter itself, a word drops from the lips; the thought is embodied and expressed. What profound philosophy in the announcement that men, by the words they speak, are to be judged. Words are the embodiment and expression of the inner self. Such was properly thought to be the divine manifestation. The Invisible and Infinite embodies himself, speaks, and his speech stands before us manifesting what is the great Thought of all thoughts. God speaks; worlds and all such grand things are his language. But humanity, as a whole, desires something more tangible and less abstract.

"Men cannot worship," says Mackay, "a mere abstraction; they require some outward form in which to clothe their conceptions and enlist their sympathies."

The entire history of the religious world has been a continued prayer for a living and personal mediator. "I need a God," said a learned pagan, "who can speak to me and lead me."

What he needed, all need. The unquenchable and limitless desires of the soul ever point upwards to a supreme Restorer, whose strength is divine, but whose sympathies and form are human. Otherwise the spanless chasm can be gazed into, but crossed, it is thought, never.

This accounts for the "irresistible tendency in the race to personify the Supreme Being." The idea of a God-man by no means originated with the church fathers, or in church councils. The birth of a God-man has been the expectation of all history. The Jewish patriarchs, as we have seen, looked for him, the prophets announced him, the sibyls pointed to him, and the poets of every nation have sung his praises.

Behind all the searchings and longings of humanity are seen the distinct outlines of the face of a man, — a man in the likeness and majesty of God. The Jewish mystics reasonably inferred from Genesis, and defended the position, that God and man must bear the same image when expressed. Such a commentary and interpretation fit likewise all human souls.

"Some," says Irenæus, "call the Universal Father *Anthropos*, man."

"God," says Marcion, "is not without form, for he

is the prototype of all beauty; to say he is formless, is to nullify him." Comparative theology, upon this point, offers from every quarter its support. The *human*-headed and winged animals excavated from the ruins of Nineveh, uniting in symbol the intellect of man, the strength of the lion, and the rapidity of a majestic bird, were worshipped as representations of the Infinite.*

Chosroes, who is said by the Persians to be a "Saviour," "among gods a perfect and eternal man," and among men "a conspicuous God," together with Mithras and Zoroaster, are the God-men of this ancient faith.

Tohe was the first God-man among the Chinese, Confucius the second. But these, together with Goschosaun, the divine man of the ancient Parsees; Osiris

* "I used to contemplate for hours," says Layard, "these mysterious emblems, and muse over their intent and history. What more noble form could have ushered the people into the temple of their gods! What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conception of the wisdom, power, and ubiquity of a Supreme Being! They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of a man; of strength, than the body of the lion; of rapidity of motion, than the wings of the bird. These winged human-headed lions were not idle creations, the offspring of mere fancy; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races who had flourished three thousand years ago. Through the portals which they guarded, kings, priests, and warriors had borne sacrifices to their altars long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated to Greece, and had furnished its mythology with symbols long recognized by the Assyrian votaries."

and Phtha, the "apparent" or "manifest God" of the Egyptians; Oannes of the Chaldeans; Melicerta of the Phœnicians; Apollo, and in fact the whole family of Titans, among the Greeks; Metraton of the Cabalists; Hobal, the divine man of the ancient Arabs; Khan, the "son of God," in Tartary; the mighty giant of "daring and valor" believed in by Celtic, Teutonic, Scythian, Etruscan, and Lydian mythologists, whose "beneficent footsteps" can benefit mortals, and whose "great arms" can be used against the powers of darkness; also Vishnu, Buddha, Manitou, Incas, and Quetzalcoult, — betray how deep are the yearnings of mankind, and how quick their instincts to interpret the slightest indications that might appear, in favor of what seems fundamental and universal — a Mediator.

The most cursory glance, even, will show that the world has ever been standing on tiptoe, as if the unseen God was about to clothe himself in human form, and stand next moment visibly before the eyes of mortals. The Simeons and Annas were not confined to Palestine. Every night since man left the Garden of Eden has he been looking up to the throbbing heavens for the Star in the East.

The Messiah-seeking Magi had faith as strong, or stronger, than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The entire ancient dispensation, including Jewish and pagan, is a kind of John the Baptist. Men have always felt that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Every great soul since Adam has said, "I am not he, but there cometh one after me mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." The common people of all nations have ever been in readiness to flock after

deliverers and Messiahs, false or true. Provided a man had done something, or made good some claim, he has had followers, and plenty of them.

Gamaliel tells us* of Theudas and Judas of Galilee, who drew after them "much people." Simon, too, had many followers, who, for a time, mistook him for Messias.

A hermit of India established himself on a mountain in Thibet. He was believed to be the returning Buddha. Hundreds of millions of people espoused the faith thus established.† In 1829 Marayan Powar became noted, when eight years of age, as a serpent-charmer. Soon he was believed to be divine, a "living God." In ten months ten thousand pilgrims came to him. At length he was bitten by one of his serpents, then died, and his glory departed.

Nor is this faith in a coming God-man a thing of the past. The more orthodox Hindoos are to-day anxiously awaiting the tenth and last visitation and incarnation of Vishnu. How impressively is this set forth in Bhagavat Dasam Askand, "When will the Helper come? When will the Deliverer appear?" The Buddhist is looking and longing for the advent of Maiter Buddha.

China had been looking west for a coming One long before the days of Confucius. Said this great philosopher, giving expression to the prevailing thought of his times, "In the West must the true Saint be looked for and found." Dreams and predictions at length deepened into convictions. The Emperor Ming-ti, sent to India, obtained priests of Buddha,

* Acts v. 36, 37. † Lamaism.

and in five centuries there were three thousand temples dedicated to the new faith. The modern Chinese are far from being satisfied. They are expecting Tien-tse, a divine man, who is to inaugurate complete restoration. "We expect this divine man, and he is to come after three thousand years. The people long for his coming, as the dry grass longs for the clouds and rainbow." Such is the Chinese confession of faith. The same is true in the West as well as East.

The people of the Nicaraguan Lake region are anxiously looking for the second coming of Montezuma. The Parsee awaits the coming of Soşiosh.

Modern sceptical thought is included in the same category, and has by no means outgrown this principle. The Eternal Repose must, in some way, become an active and visible force. Negative gods are not endured. Day is preferred to night, unless when men wish sleep. A God-man in history, or in the future, in a person, or in humanity, as explainer or revealer, demands recognition. All must touch him at hem or heart.

To elude the idea of a God-man mediator, and yet retain the principle, has led not a few to discover the divine manifestation in woman. Comte looks in this direction, pronouncing woman the presiding genius and goddess. Parker, who rejects the God-man, attempts to furnish a mediator in an imaginary God-woman. "May the Infinite Mother," he prays, "spread wide her arms to fold us to the universal heart." The Catholics in worshipping "Divine Mary," and the Shakers in adoring "Mother Ann," from whom spring all divine emanations, merely embody Comte's and Parker's ideal mediator.

But all these faiths, in pagan or civilized lands, have been better for the believers than no faiths. These waiting, and expecting, and half apprehending attitudes have saved the world's heart from despair. They have been as one of God's educators and prophets, and great agencies in the development of humanity. They have been a kind of God's Son on earth. It is scarcely too much to say that the thoughts of the coming Christ, though bearing different names, have presided over and ruled the thoughts and destinies of ages. More than this, Faith was imputed to the Jews for righteousness; why not likewise, so far as properly exercised, at least in some instances, to these Gentiles?

It is the spirit, not the letter without the spirit, that maketh alive. And most certainly faith in a divine one has, as a matter of fact, saved individuals, nations, and the whole world from utter despair.

The Karens of Burmah were for ages prevented from falling into the idolatrous practices of their Burman masters by an ancient tradition that white men coming from the West would bring them religion and deliverance. Their hearts were ready for a gospel; the Christian religion was preached to them, and they eagerly embraced it. Their case is far from being exceptional. It was this expectation which gave such dignity and culture to the old Hebrew race, otherwise despicable. It was the thought of the coming Messiah which fed so freely their sacred fires of truth and poetry. It was this which introduced those sentiments and longings, aspirations and expectations, which make their literature nourishing food for

all time. And the modern Jew, just in proportion to his faith, has been morally correct.

This Desire of all nations, by presenting an ideal, if in no other way, has developed all that is most interesting and most human, greatest and grandest, in the race of man. How much, indirectly, this principle has accomplished, none can tell. All feel that Carlyle in his Hero-worship has touched reverently upon the bounds of stupendous religious truths. "Hero-worship," he says, "heartfelt, burning, boundless, for a noblest, God-like form of Man, is it not the germ of Christianity itself?" Mr. Emerson lives, so far as he lives, by faith. If his "perpetual undertone of sorrowful and unappeasable doubt" be the product, not of an incurable scepticism which merely sports with themes of grandest import but of an inquiring and agonizing doubt, then who can say that his stainless life and earnest faith will not "be accounted"?

Must all modern Jews, including the devout, for an error of education or judgment, be condemned? There are Jews other than they of Israel. We say it respectfully, Emerson is a Brahmin and a Jew. He seems to have been born two thousand years ago in both India and Palestine. "There is no man," he says, "there hath never been. The intellect still asks that a man may be born. The flame of life flickers feebly in human breasts. We demand of men a richness and universality we do not find. Great men do not content us. It is their solitude, not their force, that makes them conspicuous. There is somewhat indigent and tedious about them. They are poorly tied to one thought. If they are prophets, they are egotists; if

polite and various, they are shallow. How tardily men arrive at any result? . . . Thus a man lasts but a very little while, for his monomania [that he has the secret of the universe] lasts but a very little while. It is so with every book and person; and yet — and yet — we do not take up a new book, or meet a new man, without a pulse-beat of expectation. And this invincible hope of a more adequate interpreter is the sure prediction of his advent." O, bold searcher, whom you seek, him would we declare unto you.

Along with its doubters the world has always also had, and always will have, its "invisible church," its divine commonwealth of souls and saints united in the common idea of a Coming One. Who they are we may not be able to distinguish.

When one of our early missionaries preached Christ for the first time to a western tribe of Indians, and had described what are the experiences of a Christian faith, he was confronted by an aged slave who had never heard of Christ, or any divine supernatural being save the Great Spirit, with the confession, "The Saving One is mine, and these have been my experiences for many years."

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," and "there shall be one fold and one shepherd," is fact and prophecy. Sooner or later the "consolation of Israel" and the consolation of the Brahmin and Buddhist, the Persian and Egyptian, the Goth and Aboriginal Indian, must be one and the same. In the mean time, however rigidly Christians may cling to the correct and scriptural form of truth, they can afford to be liberal in their estimates of the hearts of unques-

tionably good men. God knows many things that we do not.*

It is for the present a triumph grand enough for the Christian truth that the perfect ideal and divine man before Plato, and since Plato, has held the world as by fascination. Men may reject Jesus, but they will continue to seek the Christ. This true soul, this Prometheus, this ruler of nations, sinless and infinite, a God and a man, is an established fact. What multitudes have risen up and gone out to meet him! Did men truly believe that a God-man had really walked the earth, all save earth- or wrath-bound souls would ask nothing more. What he said would be believed and sufficient. All things else may fade, but the intense and vivid idea of God and man somehow, and in some form, made one, will be among the last ideas to be abandoned by the race.

These universal thoughts are no accidents, but the natural forecast of searching hearts. They are not man's, but humanity's invention. They show a feeling after and the catching of glimpses of exalting and stupendous truths. They are attempts at making a cradle

* We were pleased to hear Mr. Tyler argue, at the late Edinburgh meeting of the British Association, a more reverent consideration of savage notions. He claimed that it was shallow to suppose they were ridiculous; that, so far as they went, they were fair attempts on the part of ignorant people to explain the mystery of the universe; that what was called superstition by the civilized *savant* was the solemn child-like belief of the savage philosopher. He advocated strongly the support of missionary enterprise as one of the best means of advancing our knowledge of this obscure department of science.

for the Infant of Days. They are the shadows of heavenly things, the notable harbingers and adumbrations of eternal and immutable thoughts. They constitute a partial explanation of the Cypher of God's Universe. These dreams and representations, though more or less deformed, do answer promptly to our human touch. They seem to respond with the pulse of a life like our own. Have not these beating and throbbing souls of men been trying to give birth to a reality, and not a dream? If men have dreamed thus grandly, will not God, when the morning dawns, say to humanity, Thy dream is truth, and shall be realized?

III.

INCARNATION.

FOLLOWING this universal belief in a Mediator appears an effort in religious thought to answer the question, How can one be, at the same time, human and divine? for such it has been felt must be the true Mediator.

The reasoning among all nations and in all ages seems to have been nearly the same, and a like conclusion appears to have been reached: if a being can be God-begotten and woman-born, he can answer the conditions required, and be, at the same time, human and divine. These thoughts, in the development of theological opinions, ripened into conviction, and the dogma of incarnation, as found in the world's religions, took this form as the most natural, and as being certainly the least difficult solution of the most singular and perplexing of religious problems.

The idea of Immaculate Conception has not, therefore, been arbitrarily assumed, but was based upon an absolute as well as dogmatic necessity — that of attempting to account for the sinless origin of a sinless

person. This was also the most natural way, and rationally and philosophically the only way, of forming what all men desire — a typical union between God and man, and a real union between the finite and infinite. It is also the only way known in which can be obtained a glance at ideal humanity. It renders possible the still greater difficulty — the union of a divine and human consciousness in the same person. It should not, therefore, excite surprise that the divine men of all nations have been represented as born of virgin mothers. Though involving an apparent contradiction, is it not the most plausible conclusion that a God-man must be God and woman-born?

> "Of mother's love and maiden purity,
> Of high and low, celestial with terrene."*

It is in view of considerations like the above that we are very far from being disposed to enter into controversy with modern radicals when they assert that every religion has had its Christs, and that history is full of incarnations. This is unquestionably true. It is the very fact we, too, would establish. Were it otherwise, the correctness of the principle of incarnation might justly be questioned. Poor hope of success has any man, or body of men, who rise up at this late day to overthrow, without presenting a substitute alike in kind, the opinions which have ruled the world for six thousand years! Majorities are right as well as wrong. Majorities are usually, in their deeper convictions, but the reflection of divine will and thought. When, then, this wonderful Epiphany ever presents itself as the

* Wordsworth.

engrossing theme of piety and inspiration; when, as Mr. Weiss rightly remarks, "human struggle has ever been a divine struggle towards an incarnation;" when idolatrous art, in its various and best forms, is but an attempt to incarnate deity and give birth, upon canvas or in marble, to a God-man; when the idea, though often caricatured among pagans, discolored by sensuality, invested with superstitions, and deformed through passion, has nevertheless remained, ready, and in waiting, like all great truths, for a perfect realization; when through this gateway of incarnation, left half ajar in the thoughts of men, has been found so easy access into that temple in which the true God "is manifested in the flesh, brought nigh, to be handled with the hands and seen with the eyes," that not only the heathen, but all civilized nations, have been prying at it, or passing throught it; when the philosophy or the pantheism of Hegel, — if it be pantheism, — allows that God may incarnate himself in man, nay, that he does it in all men; when not only this great man's system, but likewise all the higher types of modern philosophy, have compromised with this religious dogma, their boasted independence, speaking with great freedom of "abstract religions" and of "generic incarnations;" when we discover that the clearest types of incarnation have always taken the place of the less perfect, as Brahma, in the East, gives place to Vishnu, and in the West, Huitzilopotchli to Quetzalcoalt; and when it is found that some of these religious fictions have been so pure and natural, that were they to find fulfilment in a reality, they would in most respects correspond to it; nay, when we consider all these facts, is there left any room

to doubt what have been the thoughts of men upon this subject ever since they felt the need of redemption and of a Redeemer? Is it an object of wonder that Eve, and every woman of the race for four thousand years, did hope to be the chosen Mary, and bear a divine Son? Will not God forgive the desire, and some time, perhaps, do more — relieve the disappointment, and place upon the bosom of some human mother a Son of God?

IV.

SACRIFICE.

THE thoughts of men, as seen in the religious systems already enumerated, do not rest satisfied with the birth and life of a Mediator, but ask and attempt to anwser the question, by what means can the God-man unite the entire race with the Infinite One? This is less perplexing than some other religious inquiries; none, however, are more solemn. The solemnity arises from the attending conviction that the means employed must be extreme — blood and death.

This idea of sacrifice is so much a part of human nature, that ancient and modern speculative thought has made no effort to outgrow it.

"The pantheistic notion of creation," says Mackay, "is essentially that of sacrifice. God, when descending to the limits of time and space, becomes incorporated in the world, identifies himself with perishable nature, thus, by a sort of self-sacrifice, originating universal life." The same, essentially, is true of all notions of creation.

It is also a suggestive and beautiful conception of

the old Persian that the mission of the "express image of the eternal," Ahura Mazda, was to release, "by a final sacrifice, the soul of nature from her perishable frame, that she might commence a brighter and purer existence."

Indeed, the principle is so clear that it may be seen in all human relations. Man, by the simple virtue of being above material nature, comes in contact with no form of matter which does not cost him a sacrifice. He bears about his physical body at great spiritual loss and hinderance. Such, precisely, is the basis of the law of atonement.

Atonement, in the abstract, is the reconciliation between higher and lower, grosser and better natures. An atonement must lie at the foundation of every act in a universe where all are not equals in power and goodness. Recognizing this truth, it is not strange that the common sense of the race has always appealed to sacrifice as a solution of its difficulties.

Again, sacrifice and atonenent seek to span not only the natural distance between God and man, but also the wider gulf of moral distances and disparities. While it is true, on natural grounds, that "the religious mind is ever striving to unite itself with God," yet it is pre-eminently this conscious moral distance between God and man which has occasioned those appalling cries of anguish, and that distressing hunger whose contemplation makes the heart sick. The wailings of humanity are full of conviction that some great calamity has befallen the race, and separated it a long distance from the divine. There are dirges everywhere of houseless and homeless wayfarers.

The knowledge has always existed that men ought to do right, that they have done wrong, and that they must be judged. In these thoughts has been anguish enough for one world. All modern glosses thrown over sin, representing it as an appearance of evil merely, have never touched the root difficulty, or in the least degree eradicated the universal conviction and self-condemnation. Men always have felt and always will feel that sin is something besides natural perspiration, and that it is so appalling that nothing trifling will meet the requirements. All thinking men who can justly lay claim to a philosophical mind agree with Plato, that upon natural grounds "it is impossible for the impure to approach the holy and perfect."

More than this: that the race has been "implicated in some aboriginal calamity," which has formed in part this impassable gulf, strangely, and yet strongly, attaches itself to human thought. The fact is, that the race finds itself involved in these perplexities, and dares not, without interventions, look to God. Belief in any deity, and propitiatory sacrifices, are concomitants. That pagan nations have been as ready to erect altars and offer sacrifices as to perform the most congenial service requires something besides surface and chance explanations. To the savage the winds and nights are thronged with giant spirits, and he ordains his priests, and asks them to interfere. Priests are not religion-makers; they themselves are people-made. The principle is the same which governs the more enlightened, who see in good men, or in a God-man, the one who can "restore and preserve the equipoise which universal consciousness affirms to have been disturbed or lost."

Sacrifice is also an expression of the right of the Infinite Ruler to inflict punishment. Human nature loves the confessional, and will make to the proper authority its acknowledgment. It is this desire to confess and to appease the divine displeasure for sins committed which undoubtedly has led to the more frightful forms of sacrifice. Man took the most beautiful flowers of the earth and the richest fruits of the field, and offered them; but these were felt to be, not enough.

"Sacrificial atonement, especially atonement by blood," says Mackay, "has ever been the great religious idea." It is one of the forms of religious cultus, and is, in fact, co-extensive with religion itself. It should not, therefore, surprise us to find expiatory rites recorded in the oldest books of the Hebrew Scriptures, or to meet with them at the earliest dates to which heathen records conduct us. Among barbarous nations, from India to Britain, sacrificial atonement prevailed.*

* Lucretius is admirable authority, and he gives us a full and satisfactory statement upon this point. "If we pursue our inquiries through the accounts left us by the Greek and Roman writers of the barbarous nations with which they were acquainted from India to Britain," says an eminent writer, "we shall find the same notions and similar practices of sacrificial atonement. From the most popular portion of our own literature, our narratives of voyages and travels, every one, probably, who reads at all, will be able to find for himself abundant proof that the notion has been as permanent as it is universal. It shows itself among the various tribes of Africa, the islanders of the South Seas, and even that most peculiar race, the natives of Australia, either in the shape of some offering or some mutilation of the person."

Sacrificial emblems appear also throughout Egyptian history and religion. The priests branded the bull to be slaughtered with a seal bearing this significant representation: a man kneeling, with his hands bound behind him, and a drawn sword held at his throat. There was an ancient custom in Phrygia of the same import. When a man desired to be purified, the priests placed him in a pit, covered with a platform in which holes were perforated. Upon this was placed an animal to be slain, the blood of which, flowing down upon the man, sprinkled and cleansed him.

In China there are fifteen hundred and sixty temples dedicated to Confucius, upon whose altars are yearly offered sixty thousand animals.

The sacred fires and bloody sacrifices of ancient Damascus are confirmatory.

For the purpose of proving their devotion to the Great Spirit and securing his favor, some of the tribes of the North American Indians underwent the most excruciating tortures and agonies, mutilating themselves until completely besmeared with blood, as did the priests of Baal in Elijah's time. All these things, any one who is acquainted with human nature would expect.

Nor will it surprise any philosopher that humanity has also been fearfully lavish of its own blood. Dr. Magee, after extensive canvassing, states that human sacrifices have been offered by every people excepting the Jews. We doubt if the exception be true of the Jews, even. Clearer exceptions are the Chinese and Peruvians, though the fact is also here questioned. The Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Phœnicians, the Carthaginians, the Mauritanians, and

all adherents of the gross naturalism of Asia Minor, built their altars, and upon them sacrificed their kindred.

Spreading over the vast territory from the northern confines of the Roman empire to the North Sea, and from the Atlantic to Asia, were peoples who entertained the same essential religious ideas. Rude black stones of immense size are found to-day scattered over all these portions of Europe. Alas! they, too, are monuments of the perplexing and mysterious thoughts which dwelt in the minds of these people. In the dark oak forests their altars of blood received men, women, and children, as the fearful and frightful expression of a deep conviction that it is guilt which separates God from man, and that, somehow, in blood must the restoration be effected. The ancient Persians, the ancient Arabians, the people of Tartary, and of New Zealand, performed similar rites of human sacrifice.

Unnumbered victims have perished upon the temple-mounds, whose ruins are spread over the central and western portions of America. Recall again those frightful scenes in Mexico.

Ashanta, in Western Africa, numbering three million inhabitants, together with Dahomey, of nearly the same number, also practise the dreadful rites of human sacrifice. Three thousand victims in the former country have been offered at the death, not of a king, but of a king's mother. What a river of blood has ever been flowing through the temples of heathen idolatry!

We pause. The heart grows faint and sick in its thought of the distress and agonies of the one offered, and equally of the one making offering.

The sufferings have not all been on the part of the slain. The moans of the victims have been more than doubled by those of the troubled souls unsheathing the knife and kindling the fire. Sacrificial offerings speak something besides bloodthirstiness. These religious devotees were not, in the majority of instances, Caligulas and Neros, more than are we. Rites of sacrifice were originally instituted, not from caprice, but from the profoundest sense of religious conviction — the conviction that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission. They spring from "divine instigations acting through human instincts and voices." *

Moloch and Juggernaut were not the products of cruelty of heart, but of irresistible instinct. The Hindoo mother throws her first-born into the sullen stream not without keenest anguish; around that child are entwined all the fondness of a mother's devotion and love.

May not these altars of paganism, this flow of human blood, these appalling sacrifices be unconscious prophecies? And though they have not satisfied the world, may they not have relieved it from despair? † Solemn and significant it is to see a sinful man go forth with a lamb for sacrifice. Appalling is it to see hands in sacrifice besmeared with human blood. But is there not a beautiful thought entwined in the wreath of smoke ascending heavenward, bearing the savor of

* Bushnell.

† Says Maurice, correctly, in speaking of the Romans, "To abolish human sacrifices is good; but a blank will be left in the nations even by the loss of such practices as these, which must be filled up, or we shall impoverish those whom we seek to reform."

the choicest of the flock, expressing the hospitality of man towards God? In it we see "worshipful homage." No wonder that God was pleased with Abel's offering, and that Abel felt God's approval. May not all this have been the involuntary and constitutional tendency of the race towards Calvary — God's way of preparing the heart for Christ? If so, will he not make some provision?

But we may go a step farther. Why is it not consistent that, in its struggling, the human soul has sometimes looked to the death of its divine man for relief? "The notion of a suffering deity was wide-spread," says Mackay, "extending from India westward, including Scythians, Asians, and Arabians." It was also held by Hebrews and pagans, that chiefs and princes, by undergoing a voluntary death, might in some way, benefit the race. They were regarded as "sublime acts of sacrificial self-devotion for the public good."

At certain times Ormuzd and Ahriman, the mediators among the Persians, offered sacrifices to the Infinite and Invisible, whereupon all things were said to be fulfilled. In fine, the well nigh universal conviction is, that a mediator, real or ideal, must at some time be sacrificed. The good man and the cross, how can they in this world ever be separated? Herein is felt to be ground for hope. A deeper faith in a divine atonement would perhaps have sheathed long ago and everywhere the sacrificial knife. But until this faith dawns, shall the world be left absolutely faithless? Incontestable is the assertion that from the Fall to the Advent, there was universal expectation of some mighty

victim of some Calvary. But there was lack of data, and of faith sufficient to save from alarm. Viewed in this light, there is a beautiful law underlying the vicarious atonement which in practical life all admire, though in the divine government some condemn.

Fabius, when sentenced by the dictator, was pardoned because the Roman people implored it for their sakes. Who objects? May it not be true that the Great Lawgiver has good and sufficient reasons for exercising the pardoning prerogative upon the ground of sacrifice?

Does it not half dawn upon us, in serious moments, that, from an unexplained fitness or necessity, this may be, or, perhaps, must be, God's method? It seems hard, but are there not compensations? May not forgiveness, based upon sacrifice, be better for all concerned than universal and indiscriminate pardon? What possible objection can there be when the sacrifice involves the world's God-man? Or who can tell if these human thoughts of mediator, atonement, and sacrifice are not waifs thrown upon the spiritual shores of humanity by the unspent and majestic tides which swell and flow forever in the divine consciousness?

V.

AUTHORITY OF ESSENTIAL THEOLOGY.

WE have now pointed out those conclusions of Comparative Religion, which have special bearing upon our general subject; these, with other points of agreement, are properly termed Essential Theology. There is embodied in this term nothing more or less than the claim that the God-idea, together with the idea of Mediator, Incarnation, and Sacrifice, belongs to the true theology of humanity, whatever that theology may be, or wherever discovered. We do not see how any wise man can assert that this essential theology is not essentially true. Can one man's personal authority be sufficient to overthrow or have much weight against universal authority?

While entering somewhat into the details of this topic, it is interesting to note, respecting it, the attitude of the disciples and early church fathers; and all the more interesting because they seem to have been far more liberal in their admissions than many in modern times. We cannot quite overlook the narrowness

which led the King of Prussia to expel Christian Wolff from Halle, on penalty of death if he returned, for eulogizing the ethical teachings of Confucius.

Believers during the late conflicts between truth and error have too often been not a little troubled when sceptics have boldly asserted, that ideas of mediator, incarnation, and sacrifice are old as the race, and that Christian dogmas based upon these and kindred subjects have no better or different foundation than those of all other paganisms, and that Christian nations and symbols are, at best, but second-hand. The method of many in meeting such like assertions has been to deny the correctness of all heathen conceptions. In this there have been sad mistakes; much-more is lost by this course than gained.

The disciples nowhere represent that Jesus claimed that all he said was new. He often referred to and restored the law of Moses. The grand purpose of his mission was anything save an effort to demonstrate that he could be startling and original. He was to fulfil. rather than originate. He was not above noticing the shadow of the daisy at his feet. Much more did he respect and appeal to the religious sentiment in man. The marvel with his teachings is, that he gave principles so comprehensive that they embrace everything ever spoken or dreamed of. He expressed with supreme authority the thoughts of humanity. Son of man, indeed!

In these respects his gospel remains to this day novel, unexplained, and on natural grounds inexplicable; but in all this there is no disrespect shown human thought and opinion.

Paul admitted that the chief advantage the Jew had over the Gentile was not in the natural law of con-

science, but in the possession of the written oracles of God.* John and Paul both employed thoughts and expressions which were common in pagan literature. Paul quotes from a Cretan philosopher, and an Attic comedian, and doubtless from certain lyrical melodies besides.† That the pre-Christian era of the world was

* "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever." Rom. ii. 14, 15, 19–25.

† The quotation in Acts xxii. 17 is from the following of Aratus Phœnomenes: —

"With Jove [Zeus] we must begin, nor from him rove;
Him always praise; for all is full of Jove!
He fills all places where mankind resort,
The wide-spread sea, with every sheltering port.
Jove's presence fills all space, upholds this ball;

open to divine communings, Jesus and his disciples would thus seem to confirm by gathering up, in some instances, those threads of truth that had been running through the web of the world's thought and history, and weaving them into a texture not yet displaced.

The apologists also, especially the Greek, — the Latin fathers, as a rule, were far less liberal, — frequently referred to the conscience of intelligent heathen as fully competent to decide moral and religious questions. They often quoted from them in confirmation of gospel truth; and their opponents more than once felt the force of this "arrow feathered from their own wing."

"Every man," says Justin Martyr, "by the germ of the divine Word which is in him, sees a part of the truth which is harmonious with himself. Clement said that Plato "touched the very gates of truth." *

> All need his aid; his power sustains us all;
> For we his offspring are, and he in love
> Points out to man his labor from above,
> Where signs unerring show where best the soil
> By well-timed culture shall repay our toil."

The quotation in 1 Cor. xv. 32, is a Greek Iambic, either from Menander or Euripides.

In Titus i. 12, Paul quotes from Epimenides, one of the seven wise men of Greece.

* In his Stromata, Clement employs the following remarkable language: "Indeed, before the coming of the Lord, philosophy was needful to the Greeks, for the reformation of their lives; and even now it is an aid to piety, supplying, as it does, some rudimentary teaching for those who subsequently may receive the faith upon conviction. For God is, indeed, the cause of all good things, of some pre-eminently and directly, as of the Old and New Testaments; of others indirectly, by

Tertullian, speaking of Seneca, says, "He utters the testimony of a mind naturally Christian." Addressing the pagan soul, he says, "Thou art not, that I know, Christian by nature; thou canst not be born Christian; thou must become such. Nevertheless, Christians invoke thy testimony." He then significantly asks, "Who taught the souls of common people these truths?"

In condemnation of those who did not live up to the light they have, he argues thus: "Each soul of its own accord proclaims aloud these truths, which Christians are not permitted even to whisper. Thus every soul may be called both a culprit and a witness; a culprit as to error, a witness as to truth.

"And in the day of judgment it shall stand before the bar of God, having nothing to say to the charge, 'Thou didst preach God, and didst not seek him; thou didst detest demons, and yet didst worship them; thou didst appeal to the judgment of God, whilst thou didst not believe in his being; thou didst anticipate punishment in a world below, but didst take no heed against it; thou didst savor of the name of Christ, and yet didst persecute Christians.'"

Minucius Felix, impressed with the harmony between many of the teachings of ancient philosophers

means of reason and argument, as philosophy, which he probably gave to the Greeks before the Lord himself came, in order to call them also to his service. For philosophy acted the part of a schoolmaster to the Greeks, as the law of Moses did to the Jews, for the purpose of bringing men to Christ, and thus preparing the way for such as were to be advanced by him to perfection."

and the gospel, affirmed that "either the Christians now are philosophers, or the philosophers of old were thus far Christians."

Origen attributed the rapid spread of the gospel in part to the "harmony of its doctrines" with the "sentiments of natural conscience." Cyprian based the condemnation of the Gentiles upon the fact that they "will not confess what they cannot but know."

"How can you who pretend to admire the precepts of your philosophers and teachers," asked Arnobius of the pagans, "blame our Jesus for uttering the same things?"

Thus, in various ways, the church fathers and apologists have cheerfully admitted that the children's meat had, in some instances, been given to "dogs." Their minds were unprejudiced and generous enough to admit that "an unconscious Christianity" had pervaded the sentiments of many who objected to their faith. Though dark and obscure spots tarnished the pagan character, still aspirations to a higher life were not altogether denied them. Much there was which is tinsel and tinkling in heathen speculations; still a nobler music was heard distinctly vibrating on the ear of the early church. Certainly we of the nineteenth century cannot afford, in the spirit of generosity, to be outdone by those of the first.

Religious truths, lofty and often Christian-like, falling from the lips of devout heathen, ought to teach us that there is in the world a gospel hoary with antiquity. "These divine dogmas," says Sir William Jones, "run like silver threadings through the systems of the most ancient nations."

The doctrine of miracles, the end of the world, the

resurrection and final judgment,* were not entirely new when Christianity dawned upon the nations.

The natural corruption of the race is spoken of by Thucydides, Polybius, Horace, and Tacitus, in terms nearly, if not quite, as explicit as those employed by Paul. "There is no one of us without faults," says Seneca. "He who calls himself innocent does so with reference to a witness, and not to his own conscience."

It is also true that Thales, Zeno, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaximenes, Empedocles, Indian Seers, and Persian Magi, taught the immortality of the soul no less clearly and forcibly than the Jewish patriarchs and prophets. How long this opinion had held possession of the race it is difficult to say; it was old in the days of Plato. He says in Timæus, "We ought always to believe those ancient and sacred words which declare the soul to be immortal."

The place of retribution, as represented in Homer's time, — a representation old when he was born, — is where "mortals live again, or rather live on, and live forever, retaining the same character and habits as in this life." In some of the most ancient sacred books of the Egyptians are accounts of a future life and final judgment, in which the deceased is represented as urging in his own behalf these considerations: "I have made to the gods the offerings that were their due. *I have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothes to the naked.*" †

This doctrine seems, indeed, to pervade pagan life and thought. It shows itself in certain current maledictory expressions among the ancient Greeks. "May the

* Rom. ii. 14. † Comp. Matt. xxv. 31–46.

earth lie heavy upon him!" "May his ashes be tormented in the shades below!" "Bruise my form," exclaimed Anaxarchus, to his tormentors; "me ye cannot bruise."

The theory of transmigration of souls is likewise confirmatory. The Sheol of the Hebrews, the Amenthes of the Egyptians, Hades of the Greeks, Patala of the Hindoos, and Dowzauk of the Persians, point directly to immortality for their basis.

The food placed by the graves of the American Indians, the bow and arrow, tomahawk and hunting knife, deer-skin and moccasons, buried with the brave, are to be used in *Hawahneu*, the other hunting-ground. The Milky Way was to the Winnebagoes the "Road of the Dead."

The Gauls lent money in this world upon bills payable in the next. "Bury me on my shield," said Leonidas. "I will enter even Hades as a Lacedæmonian."

A Fejee, taking a weapon from the grave of a friend, remarked to a missionary, "The ghost of this club has gone with him." It was an early custom among the Arabs to tie the finest camel of the owner by his grave, that supplies might be borne into the other land. Nor are the Chinese unmindful of their dead; annually they burn various garments and utensils for the use of those who have "gone before."

It suggests pleasant thoughts, that custom of Greenlanders. When a child dies, they bury a dog with him, as a guide. Over Gothard to Paradise with such a companion he will safely go.

We may add also that the day of judgment, as represented by the Cataclysm of the Aztec, the Yugs of

the Hindoo, the Great Resurrection of the Persian, the "final conflagration" of the Stoic, and the Ragnarokur of the Scandinavian, seems to be the expression of one of the root-truths in the heart of humanity.

Does there not appear to be good evidence in all this for the supposition that there has been constant intercourse between God and the listeners of all ages and countries? Perhaps the Gospel has, by some, been preached everywhere since the days of Abel.*

In many instances it is doubtless true that pagan notions were not clearly defined, and often they had no seeming practical effect. They were sometimes only the dimmest visions of the night; an awakening, it is possible, from an earlier, though not an absolutely primeval condition, into a partial view and witness of the truth.

When the souls of men thus rise up and prove their possession of vast resources, then the unconscious kingdom of truth begins to dawn upon them. The masses say "yes," then pause; they next become idolaters, then idlers. But not so with all. Some there are among the heathen who have "shown themselves to be nobler, loftier, holier, freer from vanity, freer from meanness, freer from special pleadings, freer from falsehood, more spiritual, more reasonable, on some

* "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." — Rom. ii. 28, 29.

"Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." — John xx. 29.

points even more enlightened," than some among ourselves. These great and true souls longed after God, and groped among ancient opinions, existing philosophies, and their own souls, to find him, as confined flowers instinctively seek the sun.

Thomas Aquinas and John Fletcher were not extravagant in saying that many of these pagans had an "implicit faith." They had truth enough and light enough, at all events, to be conscious of a better way; enough "to overcome the allurements of the visible and the terrors of the invisible world;" and were martyrs for the truth they could not *fully* comprehend.

Men should never scoff at these noble seekers after God and his truth; intelligent men will not. They had their mission, and perhaps fulfilled it better than some of those upon whom the ends of the earth have come.

We might also inquire whether there be evidence that the Holy Ghost has been idle among all people save the Jews and nominal Christians. What nation, or individual, has been exempted from the command, "Seek ye my face"? Why insist that Christianity is, in every respect, odd and unique? Why not admit that the lofty spiritualism which characterizes some portions of the Brahminical books, the moral devotion of the Zendavesta, the Law of the Soul's Progress of Buddhism, and the precepts of the Five Volumes of China, together with every right movement among men, are products of the Holy Spirit?

The pagan Bibles may be, in a sense, God's word, at least so far as they are not the source, but the product of belief — the expression of faith and conviction.

Dr. Adam Clarke does not hesitate to affirm that Virgil's famous

"Ultima cumæi venit jam carminis ætas"

was written "apparently under the inspiration of God."

"There was a religion," Lessing truthfully remarks, "ere there was a Bible." "All history is an inarticulate Bible." All human souls are parts of God's work. He is no less the God of Adam than of Abraham. Adam was before Abraham. All men have faculties which depend upon no human laws of mind or matter. The race has never been without its invisible teachers, or without God. Souls are receptive and reflective — clay as well as gods. Would it not be strange if they had never reflected beams of divine truth, or received impressions from agencies ever present and active? God has, doubtless, well-arranged evidence that he has spoken to all; it is upon this ground that none are exempt from his law, and that all are without excuse.

Hooker gives expression to a truthful and generous sentiment respecting pagans, in saying that "their revelation was of a nature which was confirmed, strengthened, and extended, but not superseded, by the written law of God." May we not suppose that the Infinite Spirit has inspired in all true hearts "groanings which cannot be uttered," and that the groping hand has touched at least the "hem of his garment"?

The supposed antithesis between natural and revealed religion ought not for a moment to be admitted. The difference is not essential, but purely one of words

and degree. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." God tries no experiments. Truths in one of his kingdoms never cancel those of another. Truth seen once is seen everywhere, and is always seen as truth. Yes, it ill becomes a Christian to view with suspicion the noble utterances of those virtuous and pure minds of paganism. We should receive them rather with gratitude as testimonies to divine truth, the gushing out, not of "naturalism," but of the "Christianity of Nature." Modern Christianity, like early Christianity, should not attempt to destroy these ideas, but try to fulfil, purify, and exalt them, and fear not to build from these ruins, as the Christians of Rome built their places of worship from the marble of heathen temples which had been levelled by barbarian vandalism.

And on the other hand, the unbeliever who tries to impeach the Scriptures, because heathen have approached them, is far from being wise, and is no philosopher. Had they not been approached by all pure minds since Adam, then we might justly impeach and set them aside. The soul's testimony to the truth of religion is its overwhelming argument and immovable support. No great religious truth is the work of priestcraft or priesthood, but is, perhaps, God-given, find it where we may. It is held for a time in "earthen vessels," but is none the less sacred.

This consideration has all the more weight when modern investigations in the department of Comparative Religions bring the assurance that, two thousand years before Christ, every principle of Essential Reli-

gion was held with striking uniformity throughout the civilized world.

He is an awful infidel, therefore, who would overthrow the truth in any religion on earth: seek rather to reconcile the truth, wherever found, to modern progress and thought. The natural logic, the fundamental common sense or common understanding, and the immutable conscience of the race, even when found among the rudest of mankind, demand respect from all schools and all classes.

The church should rejoice, not sigh, that unconscious prophecies and even dreams of beauty which eye hath not seen, or ear heard, have visited the hearts of human beings generations and generations ago. It should not hush these glorious utterances of paganism, for hath not God spoken to all men "at sundry times and in divers manners"?

But there is another application to be made of this thought; and to this point the attention of those who oppose Christian faith is especially invited. The matter may be stated in form of an inquiry. Did it ever occur to the sceptic, when contending for the universality of religious ideas, what a weapon he thereby places in the hand of the Christian? Is he aware that when he has urged upon public attention the correctness of some pagan notions, that questions will be asked respecting other notions? If pagans have been correct in some things, why draw the line so sharply when ideas of a Mediator and incarnation present themselves? Who knows but these ideas may be as correct as those relating to law and morals? Plato ruled the human mind from his own era to that of

Bacon. Jerome carried his works under his hermit's mantle, and Augustine under his bishop's robe. High was the compliment paid him by Coleridge, "A plank from the wreck of Paradise, cast upon the shores of idolatrous Greece." He was, beyond dispute, one of the most clear and righteous reasoners the world has seen. Yet he believed with almost prophetic conviction that there must be, or ought to be, a God-man and Mediator; if right in other respects, may he not also have been right in these religious opinions?

This thought will bear a more general application. There is no sceptic living who is not willing to admit that it will be a long time before the race can outgrow some of the sentiments in Cicero's Nature of the Gods, and also the preface to his treatise on Laws.

Æschylus deals with established truths when showing that the blood of a murdered man never congeals, and that the God who lives and "ages not" will bring offenders to justice and reward the good. The grand principles of moral obligation are, in some instances, nearly, if not quite, as clearly represented by pagans as by Christians.

The so-called "bloody Druids," who were at once the ministers of religion, the teachers of science, and the legislators and judges of the people, embodied their religion in the three precepts, "Worship the gods, do no evil, and act with courage." The Greek tragedians, too, were ever speaking of "unwritten laws." *

* With what lofty expression does Sophocles clothe the thought, "May destiny aid me to preserve unsullied the purity of my words and of all my actions, according to those

Aristotle means the same thing when he says that "justice is before society."

"It is," says Cicero, "Right Reason; not one thing at Athens, another at Rome, but uniform, and coeval with the Divine Mind." *

In the realm of practical morals these pagan philosophers likewise entertained, in many instances, correct and lofty theories. Aristotle's text-book on morals has much, even in our day, that commends itself. The common brotherhood of man is strongly emphasized by Epictetus, Quintilian, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and the Stoics generally. Says Zeno, "Greeks and barbarians drink from the same cup of brotherly love." "All men, everywhere," says Diodorus, "belong to one family." "No man is a stranger to me," says Menander, "provided he be a good man; for we have all one and the same nature." Terence is no less emphatic. "I am a man," he says; "nothing human can I count foreign to me." "Will you enslave those," exclaims Epictetus, "who

sublime laws which, brought forth in the celestial heights, have heaven alone for their father, to which the race of mortal men did not give birth, and which oblivion shall never intomb! In them is a supreme God, and one who waxes not old."

* Modern writers, with multiplied advantages, scarcely more than echo the same ideas. "The archetype of all human laws," says Hooker, "has its seat in the bosom of God." Montesquieu speaks of this fundamental law as "the substantial principle of all societies." Blackstone mentions "a law of nature, whereunto if any human statute be contrary, it is not valid." Cudworth's "immutable morality" is the same. Milton mentions "a law of laws, fundamental to all mankind."

are your brothers by nature, and children of God?" And in Vishnu Sarma we read, "Is this one of us, or is he a stranger? is the classification of the ungenerous; but to those by whom liberality is practised, the whole world is but as one family."

When the Jesuit missionaries Huc and Gabet told one of the Lamas that they were from distant France, he replied, "What matter where you are from? All men are brothers. Men of prayer belong to all countries. They are strangers nowhere. Such is the doctrine taught by our Holy Books."

The King of Siam, upon being told that a certain image in his court was St. Peter, immediately said to his little boy, "Do obeisance to it, my son; it is one of the holy men."

As we read such lofty utterances, do we not half feel that pagans are correct, and in some sort our kinsfolk?

Approaches to the Golden Rule are also found scattered through pagan writings. "What you do not wish done to yourself," says Confucius, "do not do to others." Said Thales, "That which thou blamest in another, do not thyself to thy neighbor." Pythagoras repeats and enjoins the same sentiment. "Thou wilt deserve to be honored," said Socrates, "if thou doest not thyself what thou blamest in others." "Do to no man what thou thyself hatest," is the sentiment of Tobit; and Hillel said, "Do not to another what thou wouldest not he should do to thee; this is the sum of the law." In fact, every known language has forms for transmitting golden rules of Christian faith. And generosity, courage, and self-sacrifice have always, and

among all nations, commanded the intuitive or spontaneous and involuntary respect of human nature.

We may venture a step farther. The ten sins condemned by Buddha are, killing animals, theft, adultery, falsehood, discord, contemptuous language, idle talk, covetousness, envy, malice. *Homute*, *Hookhti*, and *Vurusti*, "purity of speech," "purity of action," and "purity of thought," furnish the foundation upon which the entire system of the Zendavesta is established.

Some of the maxims of Zoroaster are touchingly beautiful, and of high spirituality withal — "Reply to thine enemy with gentleness;" "To refuse hospitality and not succor the poor are sins;" "Fornication and immodest looks are sins;" "To think evil is a sin."

Sophocles, while presenting us with the moral ideal of touching devotion and purity, shows a conscience which is thoroughly alive to the "unwritten laws" of God. In Antigone we read, in justification of doing good to an enemy, "I was not born to hate, but to love."

Now, the correctness of these sentiments is questioned by no one. But they were a part of a great system of human thought which has commended itself to the best portion of the human race in all ages. Whatever be our individual views, the profoundest respect for prevailing opinions is demanded, especially when that opinion is acknowledged to have been correct in so many of its conclusions, and when it seems to be, not merely domesticated to the habits of thought, but to be essentially indigenous to man's spiritual existence. On the side of these truths are to be found

God's majorities. As already claimed opposing minorities will, in these matters, never become ruling majorities. When so many agree, the thing agreed upon can never be a mere brain-birth. However perverse may have been popular life, these truths have remained. They have not been the exclusive property of the few; not simply the suppositions of Plato, but the convictions of the masses. Those who gave expression to these sentiments were not all thinkers, but all held fast to the opinions. "Some men think, but all men have opinions." * "Do you not see," says Seneca, "how the benches echo whenever things are said which we recognize to be true?"

But it was this same great system of human thought, supported by such multitudes and teaching such nobler truths, which also held with equal tenacity to the religious doctrines of mediator, incarnation, and sacrifice. This essential theology of humanity is as well established as its essential morality: they both occupy the same position. The appeal of one is no less earnest and imperative than that of the other. Humanity is no better moralist than theologian. Upon what grounds, then, of reasoning or equity is the voice in the one case applauded, and in the other disregarded? We may reject both; but can we accept one and reject the other?

* Berkeley.

VI.

ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ESSENTIAL THEOLOGY.

"MYTHOLOGY," says a writer of note, "records not *facts*, but opinions." But whence the opinions? Bossuet thinks they are "distortions of Hebrew literature." Gladstone says they are "myths growing out of original descriptions of nature." Creuzer holds that they are "the echo of nature in our consciousness." Max Müller decides that they are attempts "to express abstract ideas by means of the extension of concrete terms." Some look upon them as the "debris of ancient systems," often, however, covered, and concealed under parasitic vegetation. Others regard them as "broodings" of the hermits of the Ganges, and the priests under the shadows of the pyramids or elsewhere. Not a few in the last class look upon the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as transcribings from other records, and the system of religion they present as a compilation from religious and philosophical systems more ancient than themselves. This position, which has been so long in favor

with the opposition, demands a moment's notice. Is it not a singular example of unfairness when sceptics allow all forms of religious belief to flow into Jerusalem, even when Jewish laws forbade the introduction of new gods, under severe threatenings, and when at the same time they do not allow the religious ideas of the Jews to flow out into pagan lands? The Jews offered their religion to the world; would it not be singular if some in the world did not accept it?*

The Jews were scattered through Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome. They were inhabitants of Arabia, and also of Egypt. Under the Ptolemies there were a million Jews in Egypt. They performed the rites of their religion in Alexandria, had synagogues in Asia Minor, Persia, and India; and their scriptures are among the oldest writings extant. If, upon the ground of tradition or revelation, we were called upon to account for the monotheistic and mediatorial notions which are detected in all ancient religions, or to explain the definite Messianic hopes of all nations, is it not quite as reasonable to say they came from Judaism as from paganism? Justin Martyr bravely meets his opponents thus: "It is not, therefore, that we hold

* We read, "Moreover, concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house which I have builded is called by thy name." 1 Kings viii. 41–43.

the same opinions as others, but that all others speak in imitation of us." "Our laws," says Philo, "attract all to themselves — barbarians, strangers, Greeks, the dwellers on continents and in islands, in the east, in the west, and in Europe."

It is not our purpose, in these citations, to thus account for the origin of Essential Theology. We are no more inclined to give it a Jewish origin than are objectors; but we wish to show that to deny originality to Judaism, and claim it for paganism, is simply assertive and fallacious.* This position, however, leaves ground for more or less traditional influence. If there be a religious atmosphere which pervades all lands, as there certainly seems to be, then it must be breathed by all, and be more or less affected by all who breathe it.

It is, indeed, exceedingly difficult to trace religious ideas through tradition up to any one original source.†

* The position taken by Mackay is sensible. "Many Asiatic nations," he says, "are known to have entertained conceptions not unlike the Messianic theory of the Hebrews. There is, however, no proof of plagiarism on either side — that other nations borrow it from Hebrews, or the Hebrews from other nations."

Some church historian, perhaps Mosheim, has made essentially the same admission. "It is difficult to determine," he says, "whether heathen were most Christianized, or Christians most heathenized."

Dorner's conclusion is liberal, yet more definite, and, we think, nearer correct: "The opinion must seem well founded, that the entire vast region of heathen religion contains nothing that can impeach the originality of the Christian ground-idea; whilst, on the other hand, the whole of heathendom strains after this idea, without being able, from its stand-point, so much as distantly to approach the conception of it in its truth."

† In a lecture delivered before the late session of the Brit-

Aristotle does not claim that the Grecian doctrine of the gods is entirely original with the Greeks. "Since it is probable," he says, "that philosophy and the arts have been several times, so far as that is possible, found and lost, such doctrines [religious] may have been preserved to our times as the remains of ancient wisdom." Buddha, in protesting against caste, quotes an ancient "law of universal equality and grace." Confucius does not claim that he originated his rules of morality, but confesses that he obtained them from a remote antiquity. He speaks of himself as a "transmitter," not a "maker." "I only hand on," he says; "I cannot create new things. I believe in the ancients; therefore I love them."

In general, the truths of Essential Religion, and of Essential Morality, seem to be co-extensive with humanity, and as old as thought. Adventurers like Abraham and Buddha have appeared in all ages, teaching and

ish Scientific Association, Edinburgh, on the Relation of Primitive to Modern Civilization, Mr. Tylor showed that, so far as purely scientific research goes, primeval man existed in a state strikingly similar to that of the modern savage; the stone-age man of the past being represented by the savage of the present. The customs, morals, agriculture, land tenure, social relations, &c., of both were shown to be strikingly alike. He also confesses that science is upon this subject of but limited range. "As far back as it can go," — to employ his own language, — "its discoveries show that primeval man existed in a state of savage degradation; but beyond that point lies a vast unexplored region, as to which science can tell us nothing; and most sensible people will say that, as they have to choose between the account given by revelation or absolute ignorance, they prefer to choose the former."

preaching them. As these truths come to us, they are, therefore, common property, "floating ideas," "elder truths," in Adam's heart, and in all men's hearts; handed on from hand to hand, through migrations, explorations, and otherwise; unifying us with all past saints and sages, and with God; most likely they are the voice of God resounding through the ages.

If these statements be correct, it will appear that the position opposed to the one to which exception has just been taken, is likewise not valid; i. e., that all religious ideas among the pagans are borrowed from the Jews. Undoubtedly all paganism has been, to some extent, influenced, though in the main unconsciously, by that wonderful, direct, and authoritative revelation to the "chosen people." It is not too much to say that light from it did rise and spread itself for centuries upon the mountains, "before its glory reached the plain." But certainly these independent pagans did not recognize it as Jewish light, and did not intentionally borrow. And more than this, it cannot be denied that some truths not clearly revealed in the Old Testament, though luminous in the New, are quite forcibly stated, prior to the Christian era, in pagan writings. Whence are these? The truest among the pagans were Seneca, Epictetus, and Aurelius; yet they entertained the prevalent pagan notions, and looked upon the Christians as the most "degraded and the most detestable" sect of what had long been held as the most degraded and detestable of all religions — the Jewish. Tacitus speaks of Christianity as a "detestable superstition." Pliny speaks of Christians as "pestilent fellows," and Juvenal also uttered his bitter satires against them.

We think it a great mistake, therefore, to say that Seneca obtained his morals and religious thoughts by means of correspondence with St. Paul; that Aristotle gleaned his ethical system from a Jew whom he met in Asia; that Philo met certain apostles in Rome, and built his system upon thoughts borrowed from them; that Plato was a student of Moses; that Pythagoras built upon Hebrew traditions, collected in his travels; that Thales composed his philosophy from "fragments of Jewish truth;" and that Zoroaster was a disciple of the prophet Jeremiah. Such claims are not well sustained. They show a degree of unfairness that never helps the cause of truth. We are left in the face of them to look elsewhere for a solution of our inquiries.

We therefore renew the question, Whence these essential religious ideas, and what their import?

The first supposition is, that they are received through tradition. As they present themselves to modern times, it is doubtless true that they have brought along with them much traditional matter. All systems of philosophy and religion are more or less accumulative. "Patient mankind," Parker well remarks, "never loses a useful truth." "Thought once awakened does not again slumber." * It was a happy conceit, but contains a deeper truth than was intended, when Dr. South said that "Aristotle was the rubbish of an Adam."

But this position is far from satisfactory, and various are its objections. Religious conviction is something distinct from accretion; it is not a thing that

* Carlyle.

stands by outward force or traditional prestige, so much as by its own native strength. Independent of Hebrew revelation or any number of traditions, the search after truth would, undoubtedly, have been prosecuted all the same. Questions from youth to age, from first to last, while human nature remains, can never cease. Conclusions would still be reached and opinions formed, were all tradition lost. All great truths are eternal: it is merely their fashion of dress that changes. All these unspent rays, from whatever source they come, have been kept, and will be perpetuated, independent of words, or ink, paper, or tables of marble or bronze. Did not the Ten Commandments exist before they were engraved? Did they not remain in all their force, and all the same, after the lawgiver broke into fragments the stone slabs which recorded them?

But we can follow this same thought in another direction. Is it not a short sight which fails to see that beyond tradition must be threads, at least, from which tradition itself is woven? Ideas precede tradition. Ideas are back of everything. Perhaps they are back of God, or are God; we cannot tell; because, when we reach him on scientific ground, we are out of breath. Emphatically, then, accumulated traditions must have some sort of origin. We are, therefore, driven back of tradition for an answer to our question, because, plainly, tradition is no originator, and did not and could not originate the religious ideas of man.

Another supposition is, that religious opinions are the product of original and special revelations from the divine, given to the different nations in those ages when

God talked, as might be said, face to face with man; or, employing an intermediate and natural agency, an early age produced religious ideas spontaneously, as the "Life Stuff" of Huxley, after the world was prepared for it, appeared, producing life in all its forms.

Whatever religious ideas have of late appeared are, upon this supposition, fragments only of these primeval revelations or products. The Cartesian school, while not insisting upon special primitive revelations, such as are claimed for the Hebrew Scriptures, would state the matter thus: I am in possession of sublime and most wonderful ideas of God; whence come they? As the finite cannot originate the infinite, and as I am not destitute of these qualities, they cannot proceed from myself. If they came from tradition, where did the one who first stated them find them? Nay, these ideas of God are a tableau or image upon the soul, the original stamp and impression of the workman's name set indelibly upon the work.

But in either case mentioned, — that is, by special divine revelations or by special divine impressions, — we are equally forced to trace universal ideas respecting an Infinite Being, a Mediator, an Incarnation, and a Sacrifice, together with all others discussed, back to God as their source. But if these essential truths of theology originally came from him, are they not the complete and infallible expression of eternal and necessary truth? for God deals only with such. The world is God's objective thought. Revelation, be it on the printed page or in the soul of man, is his expressed thought. For God to think a falsehood would be for him to tell a lie. If, therefore, God be not a phantom,

and if the central thought of the race relates to mediation, and its hungering and thirsting be in the direction of a God-man, Revealer, and Redeemer, then God, so far as we can see and reason, would lose his title to virtue and truth did he not likewise make the central thought of history an incarnation, including the other relations and conditions already discussed.

The continuous search for these things is the famishing and *extorted* cry of God's children for bread — a cry that nothing trivial can satisfy. "Be ye clothed and be ye fed," amounts to nothing. No culture or experience can satisfy. Plato longed as intensely, nay, more so than the slave that served him.

Here, then, is an unusual and gnawing hunger, which, according to the supposition, God has implanted and excited. Did he only mean by it starvation? Will he give nothing but scorpions for eggs, and stone for bread? If the desires of humanity could produce anything, would they not have produced a God-man? If these desires are a prayer, will not God answer prayer and give a God-man? The reply and conclusion are obvious and inevitable. God will not — we speak it with reverence, he cannot — mock the long-cherished aspirations of the soul, or tantalize its holy ideals. God will not and cannot play false with the human race. He has not kindled these fires in the human soul, fires burning at night, and which go not out by day, for nought. If he has told men, directly or indirectly, specially or in general, that there has been, for instance, or is to be, a God-man, then, though man may be often mistaken in his selection and application, yet there must be, sooner or later, such a God-man as shall harmonize

with God's ideal and declaration. God has thought these things, or man had not. For him to think — as we have seen — is for him to speak. He never breaks his word or thought. It does therefore seem that God is bound, in view of these principles, to give humanity, at the best possible moment in the history of the human race, a God-man, Mediator, and Atoner, by precisely the same high moral obligations as bind him to be good and true. Many an eastern sky has the sun tinted and painted, but never without afterwards showing his face above the horizon. A faith which God inspires is a prophecy which awaits as sure fulfilment as sunrise, unless God and humanity are dreams. Even if that be true, humanity must dream once more; the God-man must be a dream, and be as real as God and existing man.

Another supposition is, that our religious ideas came from human speculations. This theory need not long detain us; it is neither deep nor philosophical. Herbert Spencer has clearly shown that the hypothesis of an "artificial origin" for religious belief is utterly untenable, and that we cannot ignore the grand fact that while criticism and science may have modified theological dogma and formula, they have "not, and cannot, destroy the fundamental conceptions underlying these dogmas."

It is clear that there can be no human speculation without certain data to start from. Speculations which to any extent, and for any length of time, have prevailed, must have been built upon data originally correct. Correct original data must have come from God, or the moral instincts. If from God, he would seem,

as above shown, to be held responsible for their fulfilment. If they came from our moral instincts, then, as our instincts are created by him, we reach the same conclusion respecting God's relations to us by merely taking, through the instincts, an additional step.

But change the course of thought for a moment, and so far as the argument is concerned, let God be omitted from the question and from responsibility. Introduce, instead, the principle of the "soul's faith."

The entire pagan world was full of faith in the data of Essential Theology. Faith is substance and evidence, and is always above sense. The atheist and socialist can never destroy these human convictions, or hinder the accompanying aspirations.

"Faith," says Fichte, "is the ground of all conviction. God is infinite, therefore beyond the reach of our sense, which can only embrace the finite, but not beyond our faith." "God," he continues, — and he might add, all deep religious truths, — "must be believed in, not inferred." May not these self-reporting convictions, these strange "preludings," be at the same time notions and facts? What, in fine, can sooner be relied upon than the sublime disclosures and whisperings of a religious soul respecting religious truth?

Divested of their halo, fundamental religious ideas, come from whence they may, seem to be invested with a dignity and importance which admit of no trifling, and furnish presumptive evidence which is unanswerable. To reject notions eagerly embraced by mankind, and fondly cherished, is foolhardy. Such ideas may have an import more vast and wonderful than has yet been conceived. The great soul of humani-

ty cannot be mocked by its own aspirations, yearnings, and gropings. Humanity has within itself the prophecy of eternal truths, and the human mind, in its mere normal conditions, does evolve these truths because they are true and must be fulfilled. What if at times there has been a false halo round a disk of glory? —"a halo," as Newman remarks, "so congenial to human nature, that the absence of it might be even wielded as an objection." Does not a halo prove the disk? Halos, any number of them, never make war upon the sun and moon which produce them. Diseases, as medical men tell us, are but "perverted life processes;" thus false religions are only perversions of what is true. "All errors are partial truths," is a philosophical aphorism. They are not the shortest distance between the two points, but efforts to find it. Nay, errors and perversions do not damage the proposition that the essential truths of religion have in them something that does far transcend the language of ordinary approximation. Why hesitate to say that permanent manifestations of human thought are as reliable as permanent manifestations in nature?

But we must narrow the range while seeking reply to the question before us. In doing so, let it be borne in mind that we raise no disputes with philosophers. It answers our purpose equally well to side with Malebranche, Schelling, Coleridge, and Cousin, who pronounce these first truths of religion to be strictly and purely *intuitious;* or, with the early philosophers, the scholastics of the middle ages, and theologians of modern times, who say they are *discerned by the light of nature;* or with Descartes, and his school, who

assume that they are *connate* with the soul; or with Dr. Reid and the Scottish school, who interpret them upon the ground of *common sense;* or with Dugald Stewart, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, who account for them upon the ground of *experience and "associations that cannot be overcome and separated."*

Call them what we may, "elements a priori," * or "positive cognitions," † products of the "prudens quæstio," ‡ or "fore-thoughtful query," § or inspirations of the Holy Ghost, or by any other name, — one thing is certain, they exist, and ultimately they must be traced back, directly or indirectly, even in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, either to special original revelations, or to certain fundamental and original elements of knowledge or belief. The subsequent accumulation, by association or tradition, does not in the least explain the first terms in the series.

Cutting off, then, their excrescences, and passing back to their origin, and leaving out the thought of divine agency, we reach the strict philosophic and naturalistic position, that all primary religious ideas are based upon original intuitions; in other words, upon the soul's faith. We have before us, then, the question of pure intuitions. But it is a universal tendency of the race to associate internal monitions with some corresponding external reality. Reality is always a coincidence of desire and thought.‖ Apply these principles for a moment to the general subject before us. We have

* Kant. † Hamilton. ‡ Bacon. § Coleridge.

‖ The Hindoo Menu is correct. Universal instinct is what transcendeth all law. "We may see God twice," — within

already found every religion, every system of philosophy, every school, ancient and modern, in quest of an *At-one-ment*. We have seen that the idea of mediator did not originate with Christianity, but that all eyes since Adam have been looking towards such a God-Man, or a Man-God, as could accomplish a certain reconciliation demanded, if not by the Deity, then by Humanity. We have seen that upon the common consciousness of the great mass of men has dawned the idea of sacrificial atonement through a divine manifestation.

We have every reason to believe, judging from comparative Theology and comparative Christology, if there should be blotted from the page of history to-day all mention of religious thought, and if all religious tra-

and without, — and in either case he is equally God. Hegel is right in saying, upon strictly naturalistic or pantheistic grounds, that "the ideal is ever striving for realization."

There is truth in the modern radical claim that "the possibility of certitude primarily depends on the voice of our spiritual constitution." And Emerson mistakes not in saying that, "The questioner which brings so many problems will bring the answers also in due time." "The subjective and objective merge into one another." "The same correspondence that is between thirst in the stomach and water in the spring exists between the whole of man and the whole of nature."

Guizot's saying is also wise. "There is a philosopher greater than Aristotle, Plato, Bacon, Pascal, Newton, and Kant — namely, humanity."

No little consideration is due to the popular expressions, "The voice of the people is the voice of God," and "What every one says must be true." He who said that when the true "statesmen's breath of yea and nay salutes the lungs, God is inhaled and exhaled," was not far from correct.

dition were completely suppressed, that to-morrow the formula of God and the God-man, more or less perfect, and essentially the same as they are to-day, would reappear. All the sentiments, hints, and expressions of thought and feeling bearing upon these points which have been industriously compiled by Grotius, Wetstein, and others from the writings of heathen prior to the coming of Christ, show that if Jesus were not thought to be the true Christ, the world would begin and continue to look until the coming of another. Abolish Christ and his religion to-day, and the oracles of Delphi, or others, would be consulted to-morrow. A divine Messiah and authoritative Revealer are found to be an established necessity in human nature. *Humanity will have a Christ.*

Allowing, then, the majority to interpret the minority, which in religious matters and matters of common sense and common understanding, other things equal, we are compelled to do, we reach an inevitable conclusion. Either these religious ideas must have a substantial realization, — that is, there must be something to correspond to these heaving and swelling tides of the human soul, — or else human nature is throughout a stupendous and disastrous falsehood, all existences are phantasms, and to the four winds should be flung every form of modern philosophy.*

We accept, however, no such issue. "Souls see what eyes seek in vain." Renan, too, qualifiedly expresses a grand truth in closing his St. Paul. "O Humanity! thou art just at times, and certain of thy

* Appendix, G.

judgments are good." We acknowledge the correctness of no religious speculations, from whatever source they come, and however profound they may be, which do not in the main harmonize with the common sense of the vast majority of the race: this is not bigotry, but philosophy. That pagan cradle-making we cannot look upon as a meaningless enterprise; it was meant well, and in good faith. Their views sometimes rested upon a pillow of clouds; but their infant-idea was growing. Behind their prattle were motion and a beating heart. The fish is a prophecy of man in geological science. God has often reflected his predetermination in humanity. His "premeditation prior to creation" * is the wonderful truth verified by all departments of natural history. The Old Testament foreshadows the New. Pagan faith is thus also a prelude to a higher; it is not accidental, nor factitious, but is as lightning-gleams in midnight darkness, and signals of something yet to come.

This "half-seeing" human nature in quest of truth is, simply, the mind of man partaking of the mind of God. "God is the quarry of all; how old it is! how long it has supplied the world with spotless marble!" "O God," exclaimed Kepler, "I think thy thoughts after thee." "Classification," says Agassiz, "is but an interpretation of the thoughts of the Creator."

The basis of modern philosophy is, "that the rational methods of the divine and human intellect must be the same." We are not remote from God. The pulses of his heart are felt in every throb-beat of human thought and being.

* Agassiz.

Religious intuitions are not merely a grand and sublime mystery, but are thoughts "before which all others in the mind ought to bow down in awe and reverence, — thoughts which may be the very shadow cast upon the human soul of that mysterious, incomprehensible, unseen One, of whose being and presence it dimly informs us."

This search for God, and for One to stand between God and man, which is co-existent with religious feeling and being, is the knocking at every gate and passage-way, and the trying of every door leading to the halls of truth. It is the soul of man prying into every crevice where a ray of light appears. It is a peering into every dark nook and corner which is thought to hold invaluable treasures. It is a shout to the Keeper to deliver up the treasure or let the seeker in.

The brawny arms of those ancient hunters were stretched out for help to do what they felt their unaided powers could not do. Their mud-clogged feet were seeking if they could find a well-made path to the invisible. They were looking for One. Has he come? — or look we for another?

MANIFESTATION.

(157)

Nemo potest Deum scire, nisi a Deo doceatur. No one can know God, unless taught of God. IRENÆUS.

I feel it; I have heaped upon my brain
The gathered treasures of man's thought in vain,
And when at length from studious toil I rest,
No power, no love, springs up within my breast;
A hair's breadth is not added to my height;
I am no more the infinite. GOETHE.

Like us, a man, he trod on earthly soil,
He bore each pang, and strove in weary toil;
He spake with human words, with pity sighed;
Like us he mourned, and feared, and wept, and died.
STERLING.

One who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs.
WORDSWORTH.

Yes! Thou art still the Life: Thou art the way
The holiest know; Light, Life, and Way of heaven;
And they who dearest hope and deepest pray,
Toil by the Light, Life, Way which thou hast given.
THEODORE PARKER.

"The last in Nature's course; the first in Wisdom's thought."

What sound is it I hear
Ascending through the dark?

The tumultuous noise of the nations,
Their rejoicings and lamentations,
The pleadings of their prayer,
The groans of their despair,
The cry of their imprecations,
Their wrath, their love, their hate!

Surely the world doth wait
The coming of its Redeemer. LONGFELLOW.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. *Luke* ii. 10, 11.

There standeth one among you whom ye know not; he it is. *John* i. 26, 27.

We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. *John* i. 45.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. *John* xx. 30, 31.

In the first rank of writings accredited by all must we place the sacred quaternian of the Gospels. EUSEBIUS.

"Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts,
In different ages born, in different parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price."

I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatever. SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

Rejecting the miracles of Christ, we still have the miracle of Christ himself. BOVEE.

There's not a flower can grow upon the earth,
Without a flower upon the spiritual side.
. . . .
Earth is full of heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.
MRS. BROWNING.

He called himself the Son of God: who among mortals dare say he was not? LEQUINIA.

What is the mysterious power of this One, which binds the hearts of all men, of all times and places, so firmly to him, that they know no higher love than that which they bear to him, and for him are ready to yield up their lives? What is the mystery of his person? What does he say of himself? For this will always have to be that which, after all, makes the final decision. For so much confidence we can in any case give him, — be we never so distrustful in other respects, — that he knew who he was, and did not speak differently from what he knew. LUTHARDT.

MANIFESTATION.

INTRODUCTORY.

THAT a colossal figure crossed the world's horizon eighteen centuries ago, no one does, and at present no one cares to deny.

Then, by universal testimony, commenced a new era. Changes, great and grand, were inaugurated. And, what is most singular of all, none now fail to see, that around the name of a certain One, as an attractive centre, all those marked events and changes faithfully and forever revolve. He it is who "created the object, and fixed the starting-point of the future faith of humanity." *

What is the interpretation thereof? has evoked responses, many and diverse.

* Renan.

I.

NEW ERA.

THE Christian era, it is well known, dawned amidst events and characteristics apparently contradictory. It was, in point of culture, neither a dark nor dead age. It was, on the contrary, a time of great intellectual vigor and refinement. It was, too, an age of literary and scientific toleration. "No scientific man was molested. Men like Galen, Lucan, and Plotinus, who would have gone to the stake in the middle ages, lived tranquilly under the protection of the law." * There were, as the result, a multitude of bright stars in brilliant constellations.

From the death of Sulla, B. C. 78, was the golden age of Roman literature, as well as the noonday of ancient civilization. It was the age of eclecticism in which the best and wisest thoughts of all the earlier philosophers were collected and taught. It was to Rome what the age of Elizabeth was to England. Then arose the greatest and grandest names of the empire. Cicero tells us that never had such a number of illustrious men lived as at that period. There

* Renan.

were critics, orators, poets, philosophers, and historians. It was the age of Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Sallust, Livy, Julius Cæsar, Pompey, Brutus, Cassius, Antony, and Cleopatra. The culmination was with the Emperor Augustus. He was the devoted patron of learning, science, and art, in all their departments. It was, in fact, an age of the highest art, refinement, and philosophy, and, of all others, the age that would have allowed no mere *pretender* to come from obscurity to the first rank in society, to mould and rule its thought as might please him.

It was likewise a time of peace. There was universal armistice between the Roman empire and all nations of the earth, of longer duration than ever before or afterwards. Augustus was ambitious to see the consolidation of the empire; he saw it, was gratified, and turned his own and the public attention to the development of arts and the industries of peace. What more fortunate time had there been for religious investigation, thought, and growth?

It is well to notice that the time of Christ's appearance was also the age of Rome's political supremacy.

Beginning with Spain, and passing through Gaul, Germany, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Carthage, round to the Pillars of Hercules again, we find that every state was then subject to the same central power. Never before as then, to have been a Roman citizen, whether merchant or missionary, would have secured a passport anywhere in the civilized world.*

* Analogies have been drawn, with much propriety, between the Roman empire at that stage, and the present political

It was, in addition to all this, an age when, as at no time before, the same language prevailed in all countries bordering upon the Mediterranean Sea — a language which scholars have ever since regarded as the most remarkable in its strength and flexibility, and eminently adapted for enshrining and transmitting ordinary facts and spiritual truths.*

Was it not a marvellous accident, if accident it were, that resulted in bringing Christianity upon the stage at that epoch, and in arranging that this remarkable language, with local modifications, modifying, it is true, its elegance, but not its power of accurate delineation, should have been the vehicle of intercommunication, that the Jews should have become acquainted with it during their dispersion, and that the words and life of Jesus should be held in its deep, rich, and versatile embrace?

While thus enumerating the favoring influences of that period, it cannot fail to suggest itself to any thoughtful mind, that Natural Religion ought then to

condition of the United States of America; unity and extent of territory being the features especially noticeable. It is refreshing, after suffering the annoyances of passing through the different states of Europe, to journey from New York to California without soldiers' challenge, civil passport, or custom house fee; thus through that vast extent of the Roman empire.

* No thorough student will hesitate to indorse the statement of Harris: "The Greek tongue, from its propriety and universality, is made for all that is great and all that is beautiful, in every subject, and under every form of writing."

Coleridge also expresses what is approved by all. "Greek," he says, "the shrine of the gems of the old world; as uni-

have produced, if ever, its grandest, and withal most satisfactory products.

What age could better have found its way into the unexplored path? What people so likely by wisdom to find out God? Surely, some learned Roman, having at command all the literary and philosophical lore of Greece, or some cultivated Greek, under the wealthy patronage of Rome, will now open to the world the temple of Truth. Alas for human expectations!

> "There is the moral of all human tales,
> 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
> First freedom, and then glory; when that fails,
> Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last;
> And History, with all her volumes vast,
> Hath but one page."

This age of Roman advantage, culture, and peace was an age of terrible moral and religious midnight and madness. The zenith of her civilization was the nadir of virtue and integrity. Instead of growing better under all these fortunate influences, men had steadily and in all respects grown worse. Ancient

versal as our race, as individual as ourselves; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and the distinctness of Nature herself; to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English; with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer; unites at once the variety and picturesqueness of Homer with the gloom and the intensity of Æschylus. It is not compressed to the closest by Thucydides, not fathomed to the bottom by Plato, not sounding with all its thunders, nor lit up with all its ardors, even under the Promethean touch of Demosthenes."

philosophy had ended in scepticism, materialism, and mysticism. Never had atheism been so openly avowed. Some of the poets trifled gracefully with the existing religion; others sternly and scornfully ridiculed it. Rome brought together the gods of different nations, placed them face to face, then cursed or disowned them all. "Not even boys," says Juvenal, "believe in the religious rites and practices."

Baffled again and again was humanity. The cries of anguish arising from this state of things were distressing. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" was never experienced by them.

Marcus Aurelius was wise, studious, virtuous. "Yet with all this," says Mr. Arnold, "he was agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond." Others had a heart-sickness which was best compared to sea-sickness. "What torments us," exclaimed Tacitus, "is not the tempest, but the nausea." "Give me new consolation, great and strong, of which I have never heard or read," was Pliny's prayer. "All that I have heard or read," he continues, "comes back to my memory, but my sorrow is too great." "The philosophers of the Academy," says Cicero, "affirm nothing. They despair of arriving at any certain knowledge." "No man is able to clear himself," confessed Seneca; "let some one give him a hand." "Those whom you regard as happy," he adds, "if you saw them not in their externals, but in their hidden aspect, are wretched, sordid, and base."

The provinces of Rome, even Palestine, experienced the same sickening heartache. "The dew of blessing falls not on us, and our fruits are tasteless," said Rabbi

Simeon, son of Gamaliel. Before this date had Polybius, Strabo, Plato, and Aristotle made confession of universal doubt and dissatisfaction; but that the same, and greater, should now be repeated in enlightened Rome, is a rejoinder not easily controverted by those who would quench the fires of Revealed Religion, and rebuild the crumbling altars of the religion of pure naturalism.

But Doubt was not the only ruler of those times. Crime was also one of the world's masters when Jesus was born. Universal were the bonds of slavery and the palls of spiritual death; and esteem for one of the most sacred thoughts of the race — human personality and responsibility — had disappeared. It cannot fail to suggest itself, in view of these facts, that the highest forms of civilization, and culture, together with religious and political liberty, may be but other forms of human curse, if unattended by — but we must not anticipate. Those early beliefs, though partly correct, did not prevent the nations from lapsing into corruptions sad enough to make the heart sick.

The old monarchies — Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Macedonia — had gone down, one by one, overwhelmed with their own vices, and there was nothing then existing to restore them.

Rome had indeed reached the height of her power and external refinement; but how vile and miserable! She was as a sickening cancer; her amusements were cruelties; her women were like ill-used cattle, and her gods were vices personified.* Theodore Parker may

* A book of testimonies could be compiled, if need be, showing the extreme corruption of those times. The con-

for the moment be our historian. "The corruptions of Rome," he says, "could be approximated only by putting together all the crime, the gluttony, and the licentiousness of New Orleans, New York, Paris, London, and Vienna." *

Nor was the province of Judea much less conspicuous in crime than Rome itself. "Never was there a time, since the beginning of the world," says Josephus, "more fruitful in wickedness." Glance for a moment at the ruling family. Antipater, King Herod's son, and Doris, the king's wife, influenced him, through misrepresentations, to murder two other sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. This the king did, and also stained his hands in the blood of their mother,

fession of Horace is significant: "The age of our fathers, worse than that of our grandsires, has produced us, who are yet baser, and who are doomed to give birth to a still more degraded offspring."

"Posterity," says Juvenal, "will add nothing to our immortality: our descendants can but do and desire the same crimes as ourselves."

"More crime," says Seneca, "is committed than can be remedied by restraint; wickedness has prevailed so completely in the breast of all, that innocence is not rare, but non-existent."

Renan could not avoid the conclusion of his investigations: "Madness and cruelty ruled the hour, and made Rome a veritable hell. . . . Life seemed to have lost its motives; suicide became common. Never had an age presented so dire a struggle between good and evil."

The Elegies of Propertius, the Satyricon of Petronius Arbiter, the Kisses of Johannes Secundus, and the Love Epistles of Aristænetus show that popular literature had never fallen into such an awful state of unblushing indecency.

* See Appendix, H.

Mariamne. Antipater and Doris then plotted the murder of Herod, who, discovering the plot, executed Antipater. Subsequently, the king ordered the wholesale and appalling butchery of all children, without distinction of age or sex, in Bethlehem and its vicinity. In his last moments he called in "the royalty and nobles," as Josephus informs us, "and ordered their execution immediately after his decease, that his death might be attended by universal mourning."

Such the spirit that everywhere prevailed in the Roman empire. Such the product of unhallowed genius, material civilization, and earthly glory, when there is "no fear of God in the middle of it." Such, too, the final out-come of temporal prosperity, culture, and art — a thing raised aloft as a sign for all ages and nations to look upon, at once appalling, disgusting, and contemptible.* Poor, unassisted human nature!

What a commentary is history upon inspired representation!† O, thou cultivated Christless Theism

* Froude.

† "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." *Rom.* i. 28–32.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there

of the nineteenth century, enter no protest; look well to your torches; they betray from what fires they have been so handsomely lighted! *

is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. iii. 10-18.

"Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 1-5.

* The testimony of Ruskin will be prized by every lover of art and truth: "This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends us to grass like oxen, seems to follow but too closely on the excess or continuance of national power and peace. In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of the endurance, the fortitude; out of the deliverance, the faith; but now, when they have learned to live under providence of laws, and with decency and justice of regard for each other, and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem arising out of their rest, evils that vex less and mortify more; that suck the blood, though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart, though they do not torture it."

But, aside from being an intellectual and wicked, it was also an age of distressing hunger. Men ate enough, such as it was, but were by no means satisfied. Why should they have been? Can hunger feed itself upon hunger?

There was an intensified longing for one to come who could change stones into bread, or feed the race on something better than bread, and who could also afterwards gather up fragments, that there should be more left than had been eaten.

The importance and significance of pagan predictions which were attendant upon Christ's coming, arrest attention at this point; they have not yet been fully estimated. The heart of heathen poets, feeling through the world after Truth, had waited up to that time, but, able to wait no longer, it "dared even predict a grand religious renovation, and the victory of a young God of the future, whose dart should transfix Jupiter who had grown too old to be of service, and set free the ancient captive of Caucasus, who was the faithful image of humanity quivering under badge of sin and worn-out worship."

It is a well-known fact that at this period many prophecies, passing under the name of *Sibyls*, were quite generally prevalent. We gather some of them from Virgil's Fourth Eclogue. They blend so wonderfully with sacred prophecies that they almost seem to have been indorsed and copied, or else prompted, by the same Holy Spirit. The Hebrew prophets, for instance, spoke of the Messiah's reign as the "restitution of all things."

So Virgil sings, "The last era of Cumæan song is

now arrived; the great series of ages begins anew. Now, too, returns the virgin Astræa [the goddess of justice]; returns the reign of Saturn; now a new progeny is sent down from high heaven." *

Suetonius (13 B. C.) made a collection of Sibyls, which was extensively circulated, and which "predicted the coming of a great King out of Judea, who should, in power and glory, reign over the whole earth."

This expectation, founded on what Tacitus calls the "sacerdotal books," was so prevalent and persistent that when Cæsar Augustus assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus, or High Priest of Rome, he issued orders, calling in all these prophetic books. Some two thousand copies, thus collected, were publicly burned. The reason assigned was, that these predictions "created great popular disturbances, and raised many vain hopes and fears in the minds of men." †

It is also beyond question that human gaze was then especially fixed upon that quarter whence it was expected the looked-for Luminary would arise, and whence One did arise, as if to meet the expectation. The pious and the wise withdrew from their ordinary occupations, and took temporary residence in Jerusalem. ‡ With sublime faith and lofty contemplation

* See Appendix, I.

† All are familiar with the story of the Sibyl offering her nine books to King Tarquinius Superbus for a certain price; and when he would not buy them, burning three, and returning to offer him the remaining six at the same price; and, again repulsed, burning three more, and obtaining the full price for the last remaining three.

‡ "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Acts ii. 5.

they watched for that morning which they believed would never know a night, and which would forever give light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death. Patriotism kindled its fires anew at the altar of this faith. Josephus tells us that the Jewish opposition to the Romans was fostered by "an ambiguous oracle," and by the hope it inspired.*

But here we must pause. First, however, let the various lines of thought be concentrated. In view of

* Suetonius, in his Life of Vespasian, employs the following language: "Throughout the whole east an ancient and uninterrupted opinion had become very prevalent, that it was fated that at this time *some persons coming from Judea should gain supreme power.* This — as was afterwards plain from the event — was a prediction of the Roman empire; but the Jews, applying it to themselves, rebelled."

There is striking confirmation in the statement of Tacitus. "A great many persons were persuaded, that according to the contents of ancient sacerdotal books, the east would at that very time grow powerful, and that *some persons coming from Judea would gain supreme power.* These ambiguous words were a prediction of Vespasian and Titus. But the common people [of the Jews], as is customary with what men desire, interpreting this great destiny as awaiting themselves, were not moved to the true view even by contrary experience."

Josephus, seeking to conciliate the emperor, states the facts in the following language: "What did most elevate them [the Jews] in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was found in their sacred writings, how about that time *one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.* The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea."

all these leading characteristics which mark the commencement of the world's New Era, it is certainly a reasonable question whether or not there was then especially needed one who, when religious thoughts were the most deeply confused and obscured, could speak to the bewildered with authority. The world had waited with some degree of patience up to that time; but does it not seem as though it could have waited no longer? "Who will show us any good?" was the demand heard on every hand. If ever one was to come who might be able to answer these perplexing questions resting upon all hearts, what more fitting time than this, which was not too soon to secure the full benefits of mediation, or too late to affect the majorities of the race? When would the "transcendental principles of Being" more likely evoke from Necessity the "Favorite"? When would the crisis of development more surely strike from existing imperfections its grand and prophesied ideal?

This was the time when the world was returning from its long and tiresome search empty-handed, and, being able to do nothing more, was simply, in a momentary pause to be followed perhaps by some rash and desperate departures. Then were the deep and dire exigencies of the race calling the loudest for help; then hearts were sighing, yet hoping; then all eyes were tearful, yet fixed upon the last ebb of the great deep, which seemed to precede and anticipate the grand tide-wave, upon whose crest it was thought the Divine but long-delayed Discoverer would be seen quelling the tumult, and be heard in the tempest saying, "Peace, troubled humanity; I am come."

II.

RECORDS.

WHEN all adjustments and reductions are made, we find but three distinct positions, which thinking men can well occupy, respecting the relation of Jesus to historic events. 1. That he was a mere man, not altogether faultless, who fell upon fortunate times and into line with providential developments. 2. That he was a being more than human and less than infinite. 3. That he was both Nazarene artisan and Almighty God.

Startling, indeed, this last announcement! Yet the controversy, as it is now withdrawn from the various outposts, is narrowed to that single issue.

In settling these matters we must depend primarily, of course, upon the records of his life. Taken as a whole, shall we believe them or not? If we cannot appeal to them as true, what substitute exists? The life of Jesus cannot be rewritten from new data. If we reject these records, is there much or any sense in talking or writing about Jesus? Such are the considerations which meet us upon the very threshold

of the discussion, and which again narrow the range to the question, Are the records fabrication, or the truth?

That the New Testament accounts of the life of Jesus are worthy of belief, though they have been subjected to the severest criticism, is a growing conviction in the public mind.* The hottest contests between Rationalism and Supernaturalism in Germany have, it is true, related to the four Gospels. But less active to-day are the contestants, and the sound of war is being hushed; no other nation is now passing so rapidly from scepticism to faith as Germany.

The opinion that the New Testament accounts are myths is, at the present stage of critical review and discussion, most rapidly losing ground.

It is also true, that the Gospel narratives, in their form and internal arrangement, seem, upon candid review, to all except prejudiced minds, the farthest removed possible from anything like legendary accounts. The New Testament writers, in respect to both myth and legend, will bear the most searching examination. They could scarcely be less brief, or more graphic, in their descriptions. They are frank and positive; they have given us, not histories, or full biographies, but memoirs in a style free from all efforts of display or efforts of rhetoric, and for the express purpose of

* No one need be surprised that the gospel records have been doubted and objected to; doubt and objection are characteristic of humanity. Plutarch begins his biography of Lycurgus with the following ominous words: "Concerning the lawgiver Lycurgus we can assert *absolutely nothing* which is not controverted."

"teaching the Christian religion," i. e., the truth as it is in Jesus.* They were eye and ear witnesses by profession, and all circumstantial evidence supports their claim. They were members of the family of Jesus. "They travelled with him on foot throughout the length and breadth of Palestine; they partook with him of his frugal meals, and bore with him the trials of hunger, weariness, and want of shelter; they followed him through the lonely wilderness and the crowded street; they saw his miracles in every variety of form, and listened to his discourses in public, as well as to his explanations in private."

The rule that governed election to apostleship is clearly stated: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."†

They were also aware of the danger and evil of being influenced by fables, and protested against the very charge made in modern times. "For we have

* No assertion could be more distinct respecting this character of the Gospels than those given by the writers themselves. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." John xx. 30, 31.

Less explicit, but taken in their connections scarcely less satisfactory, are the statements in Matt. i. 1, Mark i. 1, Luke i. 1–5.

† Acts i. 21, 22.

not followed cunningly-devised fables,* when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; . . . and this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." †

Such intimacy and caution simply preclude the idea of myths growing up under the face and eyes of the apostles.

But there are difficulties in the path of the objector which are still more obstinate.

The very existence of such a record and ideal as are found in the Gospels is proof that the character represented had a veritable, rather than mythical or legendary, existence.

The Scandinavian legends, the wilder Hindoo myths, the shadows that flit across the divine pages of the earliest Hellenic history, present no parallels.

For the men, who are said to have written the Gospels, or for any others, to have invented Jesus as seen in the New Testament, blending as he does a score of distinct aspects of moral character, including also human and divine consciousness ‡ in faultless propriety, —

* It is interesting and singular that the very word *muthos*, from which *myth* is derived, is the one here used by the apostle, as if prophetically. Compare, also, 2 Cor. ii. 17, iv. 2.

† 2 Peter i. 16–18.

‡ The difficulties attending the invention of a character possessing both divine and human consciousness have been well shown in Mythical Theories of Christianity: "The historical Jesus was unquestionably crucified. How was a crucified man to be represented as divine? He died in agony. How was an artist to dramatize the divine in suffering? If

nay, in complete unity, — making the perfection of the picture unique and transcendent, and the splendor of his personality, forever inimitable and unapproachable, would entitle the writers to be recognized as the only perfect prophets of ideal-moral purity who have ever lived, and absolutely the most mysterious personages the world has ever seen.*

my hearers are not aware of the difficulties which would have attended the solution of these and kindred questions, I advise them to study the creation of the great Grecian dramatist, the Prometheus Vinctus of Æschylus, and compare it with the Jesus of the Gospels. I am sure that correct taste will pronounce that the creation of the fishermen of Galilee utterly transcends that of the genius of the great tragedian.

"Nothing is more difficult, even in works of fiction, than to combine the attributes of holiness and benevolence as harmoniously acting in the same person. In living men they almost invariably jar. They possess them imperfectly, and one generally counteracts the action of the other. The difficulty of combining them is greatly increased, if the being uniting them is to be represented as both human and divine. Holiness and benevolence are, in fact, opposite sides of character, and no more difficult problem can be presented to the imagination than to exhibit them as acting harmoniously in the same character. No question in theology is more embarrassing than the mode in which they coexist in God."

* The confession of Rousseau is, we dare say, familiar, but we venture to quote it: "It would be more incredible for a number of men to fabricate such a book, than that it should contain the account of a real life. No Jewish writers assumed the tone, none expressed the morality, of the gospel. It has such striking marks of truth, such inimitable marks, that the writer of such books would be a greater wonder than their hero."

Jacobi states the case still more forcibly: "O myth! O, how far exalted above all human mythology is this represen-

The difficulties, then, in point of fact, standing in the way of converting or transmuting a young Jewish mechanic into a perfect universal and ideal Christ by means of either myth or legend, are now found to be enormous, overwhelming, and impossible.*

And aside from this, the New Testament writers have stood the ordeal of such critical scrutiny, yes, an examination so like tests made face to face and eye to eye, for twenty-five years, that all reading and reasoning people, unless whelmed in prejudice, have concluded that further attempts to settle the historic problems of the Gospels by any form of "philosophic category" may do well enough for child's prattle; nay, not for that even, — too much is involved; but certainly that all such efforts ill become writers and preachers who claim to be worthy the notice of men who have eyesight and common intelligence.

The theory of invention or imposture need not detain us; there is so little ground for it, that one wonders that it has ever been advanced, or even entertained. The writers betray not the first indication of imposture. They neither enter into lengthy and

tation of Christ! He who could create such fiction is able also to create worlds, call spirits into being, inspire life and the highest blessedness, by the simple power of his breath. The facts are conclusive, that one has here, not myth, but overwhelming reality and truth."

* Were the theories of Baur, Strauss, and Renan true, the Gospels would not be what they are, "always true, always sure, always unique, and always consistent with themselves," but would be found abounding in debased style, defective morality, and wild exaggeration, such as appear in all mythical and legendary writing.

defensive explanations of the various phenomena presented, nor do they even attempt to expound, praise, or criticize their master's words or works: this they certainly would have done, had they been historic or literary inventors.

They indulge in no sweeping generalities, but often recount the minutest details. They were mere observers, not philosophers. Their frankness and genuineness resemble, in fact, those faces sometimes seen, which, from the first introduction, banish all thought of anything but purity and honesty.

Nor did they, personally, lose sight of their moral attitude before God and men. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." *

Falsehood flies from death-scenes. Yet these men gave in their testimony with crucifixion before their eyes. What stronger evidence that they would "rather die than lie"? Besides, if they were untrue, they deliberately exposed themselves alike to the wrath of men and God. They had nothing to gain by being false, and everything to lose. They were mad men or men of truth.

Indeed, it is well nigh appalling to consider the attitude of these writers, if their work were one of fraud and imposture. Take for illustration the Gospel of John. Christ's secret colloquy with Nicodemus, the testimony of John the Baptist, the stupendous miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, are there re-

* Acts iv. 19, 20.

corded. They are in John's peculiar style. They were facts, or they were manufactured out of John's imagination, and then stated for facts. If the last supposition be correct, what a shock must be given to the moral character of the writer! With such falsehood upon his lips he could never have written those later Epistles. He could never again lift his eyes to meet those of humanity henceforth riveted upon him.

Taking all things into account, the facts recorded in the New Testament are more marvellous, if invented, than if true. The issue is the sharpest and most decisive possible; these records are very truth, or the most triumphant, systematic, skillful, monstrous invention and lying ever conceived of.

The writers have been charged, on the other hand, with being ignorant men, and were, in consequence, it is claimed, imposed upon. And they are also said to be self-contradictory. We grant the first supposition, if desired; but ignorance, in the sense of being illiterate, — the only sense allowed in this connection, — is not want of intelligence or common sense. Upon matters of simple observation, we cannot see why their testimony is not as reliable as if they had been Platos or Newtons. Even if they disagreed in some minor points, that would not destroy the essential reality of the thing seen or stated, on the ground of their illiteracy, or any other.

"That is a sound principle long since announced," says Grotius, "experience proves that scarcely any amount of variation, as to time or circumstances of a fact, in authors who record it, can be a sufficient ground for doubting its reality."

But these men, as a matter of fact, were not so illiterate or contradictory as to allow discordant accounts or contradictory reports to appear in their writings. The harmony is really wonderful. Between the first three and fourth Gospels, the Acts, and the early Epistles, there is essential agreement, such as can be found in no other such body of literature in the world.

Or change the line of thought, and let any one say what he is disposed respecting their ignorance, their falsehood, their blindness, and their self-contradiction, — one thing cannot be denied; these Galilean boatmen displayed a mighty something, — call it ignorance, or contradiction, or anything else, for "no word ever uttered has shaken the world like their rude speech."

They repeated or originated words which have given new life to all nations, and have thrown an additional charm over all civilization. They came not as usurpers; but those rude disciples have ruled in every department of thought as if they had been born kings.

Denis Diderot, himself a leading free-thinker, exclaimed, in a company of French infidels, "I defy you all — as many as are here — to prepare a tale so simple, and at the same time so sublime and so touching, as the tale of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, which produces the same effect, which makes a sensation as strong and as generally felt, and whose influence will be the same, after so many centuries."

But there is another fact to be noticed. After the most thorough sifting, the statements of the evangelists are found to be in harmony with contemporaneous his-

tory, chronology, geography, and topography. Early institutions and every department of archæology are likewise confirmatory.*

Lewis, Layard, Rawlinson, Champollion, Bott, Volney, Renan, Robinson, Thompson, Hengstenberg, return from their critical explorations in Bible lands, having, in some instances, been continually actuated by a sceptical spirit, with not one well-substantiated fact against Scripture authenticity or genuineness.†

Notice another fact in this connection which cannot be too strongly insisted upon; the evidence, we mean, "which has been wrung from the inevitable candor of reluctant adversaries." The writings of early sceptics, the commentary of Basilides, the review of Marcion, and the works of Tiberius, Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, Hierocles, and Symmachus, against the Christians, never called in question the matters of fact

* We might quote authorities without number: a few must suffice. Says Dr. Channing, speaking of the agreement between sacred and profane history, "They [gospel narratives] interweave themselves with real history so naturally and intimately as to furnish no clew for detection, — as to exclude the appearance of incongruity and discordance."

"I have nothing," writes Lessing, "against the Christian religion. I believe it and hold it true so far and so strictly as one can believe and hold true anything whatever that is historical; for I can by no means gainsay it in its historical proofs."

Says Renan, — and whose report can be relied upon by sceptics, if not his? — "The striking agreement between the texts and the places, the marvellous harmony of the Bible ideas with the country which serves them for a frame, was to me like a revelation."

† See Appendix, J.

recorded in the Gospels, and unhesitatingly admitted the evidence of all the great *signa* of Scripture.

Celsus refers to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, by name, and makes eighty allusions to, or quotations from, the New Testament writings. He mentions Christ's birth from a virgin, in a small village of Judea, and speaks of the adoration of wise men from the east. He portrays the slaughter of the infants by the order of Herod, and the flight to Egypt, where he supposes Christ learned the charms of magicians. He speaks of Christ being called the Word by his disciples, and recounts, with more or less fulness, the residence of Jesus in Nazareth, the baptism, the descent of the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove, the voice from heaven, the election of his disciples, his friendship with publicans and other low people, his cures of the lame and the blind, and raising of the dead, the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, the principal circumstances in the history of the passion, crucifixion, and resurrection.*

It is true Celsus perverts, or abuses, most of these facts; but, according to his own showing, they were then generally believed, and had always been tenaciously held by all Christians. He denies none of the miracles of Jesus; but, like the Jews, refers them to evil spirits, and makes Jesus a magician and impostor.

* In these allusions he mentions especially the fact of the blood flowing from the side of Jesus when crucified; he speaks of the visit of the angels, and, in repeating the Christian narrative of the resurrection, he says that Christ, "after he was dead, arose and showed the marks of his punishment, and how his hands had been pierced."

Julian also acquaints us with some of the leading miracles of Jesus. He speaks of the healing of the lame and blind, "the exorcising of demoniacs," and "the walking on the sea."

Hierocles likewise admitted that Christ "raised from the dead" certain persons, and healed many who were sick.

The Jewish accounts are to the same effect. The Talmudical literature, commencing in the second century, gives prominence to Christ's important miracles. "The later Jews," says Mr. Baden Powell, in Essays and Reviews, "adopted the strange legend of the Sepher Toldeth Jehsu, which describes his miracles substantially as in the Gospels, but say that he obtained his power by hiding himself in the temple, and possessing himself of the secret ineffable name, by virtue of which such wonders could be wrought."

Mr. Powell quotes, also, from Limboreh this statement of Orobio, a Jewish writer: "The Jews disbelieved, not because they denied that the works which are related in the Gospels were done by Jesus, but because they did not suffer themselves to be persuaded by them that Jesus was the Messiah."

The same is true of all the apocryphal literature belonging to that period.

The Apologies of Justin Martyr, the Epistles of Barnabas, the Letters of Ignatius and Polycarp, all prior to 140 A. D., are also confirmatory. There were doubts and controversies in the early church, but never *a doubt expressed as to the truthfulness and reliableness of the Gospel reports respecting Jesus.* Indeed, it had not occurred, either to Christian or

pagan, Jew or Gentile, down as late even as 426 A. D., to doubt, or in any way to call in question, the main facts which Christianity presented, or upon which it rested.

Here, then, we have an array of evidence supported by ecclesiastical, heretical, apocryphal, and antagonistic literature, which, in amount and character, is such as substantiates no other writings extant.

Why is it not also logical and philosophical to introduce in the argument the convictions and beliefs of all devout Christians, from the apostles and fathers down to the present time, as confirmatory, presumptive, or moral evidence?

The statement of the case is this: the New Testament teachings, as a whole, have long since been admitted by the great body of intelligent men and women throughout Christendom, whether experimental Christians or not, to be internally probable, and singularly adapted to human want; they clearly set forth the fundamental truths of natural religion, and are remarkable for enjoining every virtue taught by all the world's philosophers, without allowing their vices.

And in addition to this, "The majority of those who call themselves Christian worshippers, every time they assemble, renew the profession of their faith in the leading facts which this history records. They listen, perhaps, to some extract from the narrative whose interest never tires. Every first day of the week is but a renewed proclamation of Easter, — that Christ did, in fact, rise from the dead. Every Christian prayer and song repeats this faith. Every child

in a Christian household is first bewildered, and then elevated and entranced, by the sweet story of the Lord Christ, who was obedient to his parents, and dwelt in Nazareth, and at twelve years old was left alone in Jerusalem. Old age, when it tires of everything else, and has had enough of this life, is never tired of the story that records the words that were spoken by Jesus. The land where this history was enacted is clothed by the imagination with singular attractions, because the Christian history is believed to be true."

Now, would it not seem to be impossible, during so many years, nay, centuries, to palm off upon so many multitudes of thoughtful and intelligent men, for what is true, that which is palpably or essentially false? If such a thing be possible, then faith in human judgment and common sense is a delusion greater by far than that of the narrative which has deceived them.

But we must pause, sum up the points made, and seek a conclusion. When we consider the character of the writers, and the nature of their writings; when we enumerate the difficulties standing in the way of accounting for the records upon the ground of myth, legend, imposture, or ignorance; when we discover their wonderful harmony with existing data, and perfect agreement with every fresh discovery; when we find confirmatory testimony on all hands, no early sceptic assailing the facts in the life of Jesus, and no early defender of the Christian faith ever feeling himself called upon, or ever attempting, to offer proof of the facts as facts; nay, more, when we have a portrait of Jesus projected upon profane history, including the facts and miracles of his life, substantially harmonious

with the whole body of scriptural representation, and so reasonable and self-consistent as to answer the highest ideal of all true philosophy, and so adapted to human wants, and so identical with the voice of Christian experience and consciousness as to be implicitly believed by the most devout minds of all times, — do not these evidences and probabilities of the authenticity of the New Testament narratives reach the very climax of absolute moral certainty? And whatever be the attacks upon them, do they not remain serene and sublime in their integrity, like the great character who spoke the words and performed the deeds?

III.

HUMANITY OF JESUS; FACTS AND OPINIONS.

THAT Jesus possessed human nature lies upon the face of all the various accounts respecting him. That he was not spirit, nor angel, but veritable human flesh and blood; whatever his words or deeds import, that he stood as a man among men; in fact, that he was as much a man as any disciple who followed him, and that God was his Father as much and the same as he is our Father, — can be denied by no one upon a candid critical or casual examination of his biography.

We can, therefore, but agree with Stephen Farley, when he says that the "apostle Paul had no doubts" as to the humanity of Jesus, and that "our Lord was a man in all the sinless aspects of humanity."

If Mr. Farley will allow a parenthesis of only four words, we will indorse his stronger statement that "the fact is plain and indubitable that Jesus was a man, and" (*as to his humanity*) "nothing more than a man."

Following the records, we do not see that it is possible for any different conclusion to be reached. It is the repeated affirmation of the Gospels that Jesus was born of a woman. Mary, his mother, is represented, not as "a sort of divinity born of the clouds," but a devoted mother, and a pure, truthful, honest, and faithful daughter of Abraham. The child she bore is presented in the gospel narrative as a child, which, in all the helplessness of human childhood, "grew, and the grace of God was upon him." * His brethren are referred to; † also his sisters.‡ His obedience to parental authority, § his baptism, ‖ the descent of the Spirit upon him,** his temptation, †† his life of prayer, ‡‡ his weariness, hunger, §§ and thirst, ‖‖ his susceptibility to joy and sadness,*** those occasional states of mind which bordered upon gloom and hopelessness, ††† his real prostration and helplessness in the hour of death; ‡‡‡ these, together with his whole earthly life, give daily proofs of actual humanity, and unqualifiedly have no meaning unless Jesus were really and truly man.

We pass from statements of fact to statements of opinion. The New Testament writers, both in the

* Luke ii. 40. † Luke viii. 19. ‡ Matt. xiii. 56.
§ Luke ii. 51. ‖ Matt. iii. 13–16. ** John i. 32.
†† Matt. iv. 1.
‡‡ Mark i. 35, vii. 34. John iv. 6–8,
§§ Matt. iv. 2. ‖‖ John iv. 7; xix. 28.
*** John ii. 17; Mark viii. 12; Luke xix. 41; John xi. 33–38.
††† Matt. xxvi. 38; John xii. 20–27.
‡‡‡ Matt. xxvii. 45–50; Mark xv. 33–37; Luke xxiii. 44–46; John xix. 30.

Gospels and in the Epistles, state certain opinions, which they base, in some instances, upon facts, and in others upon professed revelations. That is, these men claimed to be supernaturally inspired in the formation or expression of their opinions; and what good reason have we for disputing their honesty, or the facts?

Paul's opinion respecting the human nature of Jesus, apart from all other considerations, will, we think, be indorsed by every one. The following statements from his pen cannot be easily misunderstood: —

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;* "And the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ;† "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead;" ‡ "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham;" § and "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman," "in the similitude of sinful flesh." ‖

There are many other passages; but if these are not sufficient to show that Paul taught that Jesus had a real human body and nature, and that his physical life was thoroughly human, and dependent upon God, then we know not what amount of evidence would be necessary to produce conviction.

We have also the opinion of others. Matthew says that Jesus was the "first-born son" of Mary.** John says, "The Word was made flesh;" †† and Peter, on the day of Pentecost, describes Jesus of Nazareth as "a man approved of God." ‡‡

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † Rom. v. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 21.
§ Heb. ii. 16. ‖ Gal. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 3.
** Matt. i. 25. †† John i. 14. ‡‡ Acts ii. 22.

In reaching our conclusion, we are not, however, dependent upon the use of terms merely.

The two constituent parts of human nature, body and soul, are repeatedly ascribed to Jesus.* Also the affections and spiritual qualities, together with the moral and animal nature of humanity, were, in the opinion of his contemporaries, as much parts of the constitution of Jesus as they were parts of their own. He had so manifestly the bearing and appearance of a man, that general public conduct and opinion ever betray their conviction of the fact. "This is he," said John the Baptist, "of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me." † "Come," said the woman of Samaria, "see a man which told me all things that ever I did." ‡ "A man that is called Jesus made clay," said the blind born, "and anointed mine eyes." § "Whence hath this man these things?" inquired they of his native village. ‖

The Scribes and Pharisees saw clearly enough the humanity of Jesus, refusing, for a time, to see anything greater. "This man," they said, "is not of God." ** "The Scribes said, This man blasphemeth." †† "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." ‡‡ "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known." §§ "Away with this man!" ‖‖ exclaimed the rulers and mob, upon the day of his crucifixion; and, "This man calleth for Elias," *** said those who stood near the cross. It was

* Luke xxiv. 39; Matt. xx. 28; John xii. 27; Col. i. 22; 1 Peter iv. 1.

† John i. 30. ‡ John iv. 29. § John ix. 11. ‖ Mark vi. 2.
** John ix. 16. †† Matt. ix. 3. ‡‡ John x. 33.
§§ Luke vii. 39. ‖‖ John xix. 15. *** Matt. xxvii. 47.

Pilate who "asketh whether the man were a Galilean," * and who, after a thorough examination, affirmed, "I find no fault in this man," † and also said, "Behold the man!" ‡

It is a *man* that the people met in the courts of the temple and among the hills of Galilee. It is a *man* that they saw walking among scenes of distress, leading his disciples, led to the trial, and going to the cross. It is a *man* whom, with perfect freedom, the people questioned. It is a *man* whom the disciples expostulated with, rebuked, betrayed, and forsook. It was the physical body of a *man* which they came to embalm, and it was the physical body of a *man* whom they could only with the greatest difficulty believe had risen from the dead.

It would seem, then, that we must deny common sense and eyesight, and common ear-hearing, to this multitude of witnesses, or else receive their testimony as to the veritable human nature and appearance of Jesus, the *man*.

But the last, and, to us, unanswerable evidence that Jesus Christ was man, rests upon his personal testimony. In introducing this evidence, we fully indorse President Eliot.

"The principal source of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ must evidently be his testimony of himself. It is possible that his disciples were mistaken in their estimate of him, as we know they were during a great part of their lives; but his record of himself must be received as true. Even those who only admit that he was an honest, truth-telling man, must either

* Luke xxiii. 6. † Luke xxiii. 4. ‡ John xix. 5.

modify that admission, or must equally admit that what he said of himself must be believed. But those who assent to his divine authority have committed themselves still more fully, and are no longer at liberty to question the truthfulness of his claims. It seems to me, that, among Christians, we may narrow down this question concerning Christ to the simple inquiry, 'What did he himself say?'"

Yes, "what did he himself say?" is a fair inquiry, and a thorough test of the entire question.

Take, for illustration, the name which Jesus employs in preference to any other — "Son of Man." This he applies to himself in nearly fifty instances, and under so great variety of circumstances and in such singular connections, that no grounds are left upon which to deny that the title unites him forever, in bonds the most real and intimate, not with angels or archangels, but with our common humanity.

But as before, so in this case, we are not dependent upon the use of a single term. Upward of thirty times in the Gospel of John alone, does Jesus speak of God as, "my Father." In the following confessions, also, taken in their connections, we cannot fail to see the attitude of pure humanity: —

"My Father is greater than I;" * "Neither came I of myself, but he sent me;" † "I can of mine own self do nothing;" ‡ "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works;" § "But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." ‖

* John xiv. 28. † John viii. 42. ‡ John v. 30.
§ John xiv. 10. ‖ John xx. 17.

The frequent allusions to himself as "Son of David," his acknowledgment of dependence,* his confession of limited knowledge,† his last formal and recorded prayer, ‡ which breathes throughout the sentiments and sympathies of a human heart, and his interview with the disciples after his resurrection, when he said unto them, "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have;" § all these, in connection with the gospel narratives and public opinions, present Jesus to the world in possession of a clear type of human consciousness, and of human nature.

While the Christian is unable to become relatively enthusiastic upon the subject of Christ's humanity, still he must admit that "if the evidence is not overwhelming that Christ was perfectly man, he cannot conceive it possible that any point in theology or morals is capable of being established."

* John v. 19. † Mark xiii. 32. ‡ John xvii.
§ Luke xxiv. 38, 39.

I.

DIVINITY OF JESUS; RECORDED FACTS.

AN imposing vestibule is in perfect keeping with an imposing palace. Were Jesus divine, as well as human, while the introduction to his humanity might take place in a stable, the introduction to his deity ought to be made amid transactions which pass entirely beyond the range of the ordinary and human.

That Mary of Nazareth received an announcement * so remarkable as to evoke a song of assurance and faith, should be a matter of no surprise; but had it been otherwise, all might be filled with apprehension, for the palace had then been destitute of an appropriate vestibule.

The same is true of the vivid anticipation of the part to be performed by John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias,† the song of Simeon, ‡ Anna's response, § the angel chorus, ‖ and the brilliant star,** together

* Luke i. 32, 33; Luke i. 54, 55.
† Luke i. 68–79.
‡ Luke ii. 29–32.
§ Luke ii. 38.
‖ Luke ii. 13.
** Matt. ii. 9

with Herod's savage edicts.* That is, there is manifest propriety in these attendant events. From the nature of the case, they disclose the delight of the godly and the terror of the godless, who unite in their attestation of the conviction that the time and the One had come.

If Jesus were the Son of God because begotten of the Holy Ghost; † if Mary, as the representative of humanity, gave him to the world, a first-born; ‡ if he were the child upon whose shoulder the government shall be placed; if he be the one whose name shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" § if, in fine, there is wrapped up in that cradled infant the Strangler of the world's Evil, and the Divine Governor to whose government there shall never be an end, — then the absence of miracles would be a wonder greater than their presence.

Referring to the records, we find that the "first retinue of this king of souls" was a company of shepherds. They were pious men; they had been searching and waiting. While at their occupation, during the deep stillness of a quiet night, they heard among the very hills surrounding them a song such as earth at no other time had heard. They rose, and under supernatural guidance these men entered the stable, saw a young child, its mother, and her husband, knelt, and worshipped — that *babe!*

Later, wise men, philosophers from Persia, appeared. They were doubtless teachers of the religion of Zoro-

* Matt. ii. 16.
† Luke i. 35.
‡ Luke ii. 7.
§ Isa. ix. 6.

aster, and were most certainly men of great faith; perhaps no less so than Abraham, when he left his home in Mesopotamia for the distant land of promise. These wise men from a land of wisdom, protected by study and culture against human deceit, entered the stable, drew near, knelt at the manger, and worshipped the *babe!* With silent joy they spread their rich offerings before this child and its mother. These were the first Christmas gifts the world had seen, and were, if they mean anything, the most significant.

And what! That babe an ordinary child, of obscure parentage, from a despised village, poverty his recommendation, with no angel to announce him, and no star to witness for him, and no Spirit of God to present and plead his cause in the heart-consciousness of these men? Then were not the visiting shepherds and Persian wise men, madmen or fools?

Into what a network of difficulties is sceptical philosophy entangled by these historic connections and harmonies!

The curtain concealing the life of Jesus was not again lifted until he was twelve years of age. At that time, with his parents, and a large company from Nazareth and its neighborhood, he visited Jerusalem.

His conduct, while in the city, has no parallel. It seems that to him, as to no other, the sight of those worshipping multitudes was crowded with strange import. He at once separated himself from parents and companions. He visited the temple. Here he, no doubt, saw the sacrificial offerings waiting to be slaughtered. We can almost follow the sensitive youth, as he drew near, looked upon the bloody knife,

and heard the moan of the innocent victim. Can he foresee that the knife, and the blood, and the moan, are meant for him, — the image of his own agony, twenty years hence? Should we be surprised to hear, "Father, if it be possible," escape his lips?

That visit to the temple is justly represented as the enactment of his life. He forgot, at the end of the allotted time, to return with his parents. He visited those parts of the temple where the most distinguished men of the nation were assembled. He questioned them; he answered them; he probed them, to know if they understood the meaning of all those things he had seen. No one of those Rabbi could cope with his questions, or confound him with theirs. They were astonished; other discussions ceased; other thoughts were arrested; other speech was silenced; and upon that *boy* of twelve years every eye was fixed, and held immovable, as by divine charms. His mother returned, gently chided him, and received a singular reply: "Wist ye not that I *must* be about my Father's business?" And yet this language, so unaccountable in one whom the world regards as a model son, and so disrespectful on the lips of any other, does not seem out of place when spoken by him. No child ever took advantage of it. It seems, as he uttered it, the embodiment of appropriateness.

Nor less appropriate is the attitude he assumes the next moment, as, in the relation of a dutiful son, he returned with his parents to his humble home in Nazareth.

He a child like other children? Nay, that bit of his boyhood history suggests a something which is amply

sufficient to demolish, at a single blow, the modern sceptical theory which beholds in Christ only a sharp, successful, calculating leader and reformer of the people. His greatness dawned upon him, not in his vigorous and "ambitious" manhood, but in his innocent childhood.

How strangely men carry about them the insignia of their rank! Words that are spoken, and deeds that are performed, by one man, are allowed and commended, which would ill become another. The words and deeds of Jesus, which would be blasphemy and sacrilege in another — why do they so well comport with all our thoughts of him? *

Recall another scene, eighteen years later. Jesus was then in the prime of life. He has been represented as tall in person, graceful, healthful, manly, and in every respect a perfect model of humanity, as, doubtless, he was. Walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two fishermen engaged in their vocation, and

* Harris carries the thought still farther, including the miracles. "However incredible the Scripture miracles would seem in any other book, we are never conscious of surprise, never regard them as incredible, incongruous, or unexpected, when we read of them in the Bible. The central thought, that this is the record of God's feelings and acts in saving men, is so vast, the truths opened to us are so stupendous, the scene disclosed so sublime, every step in the progressing story is so manifestly the step of the Almighty, that these great miracles harmonize with the grandeur of the whole revelation; they seem to us no more surprising or incredible than the rainbow with which God adorns the retiring storm, or the stars with which he nightly gems the sky."

he said unto them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They forsook all. The world dwindled, in a moment, into nothingness. They followed him, clung to him, suffered with him, and died for him. Shortly after, multitudes followed. He led them to a mountain, and then — to those rough people — this personage, without education, reputed son of a carpenter, uttered words — what words! Words never equalled by mortal man! Words which have filled Parker, Renan, Strauss, Paulus, the free-thinkers of all countries, with amazement.*

The limits of our discussion forbid a full length sketch of the life of Jesus; but we may glance at the scenes of a single day or two.

It is Professor Porson who says that he "would rather see a single copy of a daily newspaper of ancient Athens, than read all the commentaries upon the Grecian tragedies that have ever been written." The reason is, that one would thereby be more fully admitted than by any other means into the conditions, achievements, and attainments of the leaders and the people.

"It is worthy of remark," says President Wayland, "that we are favored with a larger portion of this kind of information respecting Jesus of Nazareth, than of almost any other distinguished person that has ever lived." For this the world cannot be too deeply grateful.

The day we select to illustrate our purpose is Tuesday of the Last Passover, and during the last full week of Jesus' life. The previous night of Monday

* Appendix, K.

had been passed among his friends in Bethany. The first rays of the morning light found him on his way to the temple. No time could be lost. Much was to be done. "Early must he go, late return." As the people began to assemble, he commenced his public teachings of the Truth, the Way, and the Life. Very soon he was waited upon by a formal deputation from the Sanhedrim, who were sent to ask two questions. First, "By what authority doest thou these things?" and, second, "Who gave thee this authority?" *

But Jesus was not appalled, or even disturbed by their presence, or questions. He spoke by no human authority, and was in no haste to tell them whence his authority. Question, rather, must be met by question. Let the Jewish rulers first reply to him, and then, in turn, shall answer be given them. "Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I will likewise tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" †

They were baffled. They could not answer; and, retiring from his presence, they said among themselves, "If we shall say, From heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men, we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet."

The alternatives were shrewdly weighed and well put by these men of rare subtlety and practical dialectics, but were followed with the necessary admission, "We cannot tell." "Neither tell I you by what au-

* Matt. xxi. 23. † Matt. xxi. 24, 25.

thority I do these things," was the straightforward and uncompromising reply of the Teacher. Without pausing, he thereupon stated to them three parables. First, that of the two sons of the husbandman, the one of whom said, "I go, sir," and went not; the other of whom said, "I will not go," but afterwards went.*

The parable was so nicely wrought, that his enemies declared their own guilt before they were aware of it; and Jesus, taking the words from their lips, pronounced their unmitigated sentence, thus: "I say unto you that the publicans and harlots" (the worst people in society) "go into the kingdom of God before you."

"Hear another parable," he continued. "There was a certain householder." The parable is recognized as that of the wicked husbandmen.† In it Christ declared the punishment of these Jews as explicitly as he had previously pronounced their sentence of condemnation.

The third parable was that of the "marriage of the king's son,"‡ in which he directly and clearly set forth the judgment of Jerusalem, and the establishment of the new theocracy of the kingdom of God.

But before these parables were completed, the Scribes and Pharisees, perceiving he spoke of them, were thirsting for his blood, and death, and were only prevented from springing upon him, like hungry wolves, through fear of those poor but honest people, who stood, on the day in question, as the body-guard of Jesus, listening to the gracious words that fell from his lips, and were so thrilled by them that they were ready to die in his defence.

* Matt. xxi. 28, seq. † Matt. xxi. 33, seq. ‡ Matt. xxii. 1, seq.

One course remained open to these enemies, that of bringing a legal suit against him by entrapping him in his speech; a sort of confession that their artifice had been thus far baffled, and their hypocrisy worsted. The plot was this: to call a convention of the Pharisees and Herodians in some adjoining room of the temple, and devise a question which required Yes, or No, for the answer, and which, answered either by Yes, or No, would doom him to death. A singular convention; made up of parties who could not tolerate one another on ordinary occasions. The bitterest enemies of Rome, and the Roman political party, "religious hypocrisy," "political craft," and "hierarchical prejudice," uniting in a fraternal embrace to crush this supposed Nazarene intruder. What a coalition! "What amazing reconciliations are wrought by a common hatred!"

As might be expected from such a body, they arranged one of the most perplexing and dangerous questions that could then have been devised. To better conceal their purpose, they declined to go before him themselves, as in the former instance, but sent a special deputation, consisting of their disciples, young and inexperienced persons; students of their religion, in fact. They appeared in the guise of mere inquirers concerning a question of conscience. They were full of apparent integrity, clothed with apparent humility, and spoke with the profoundest courtesy. "Master," they said, "we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the person

of men. Tell us, therefore; what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" *

Death was concealed in either answer, if direct.

Around them were spread the temple courts and thronging worshippers of the God of Israel. An indiscreet answer would have easily stirred these irritated and excitable masses that surrounded him into a furious mob. The popular mind is friend or foe at a single step.

But yonder stood the palace of the first Herod, and in front was frowning the tower of Antonia. The one of these conditions demanded an unqualified Nay to the question, on pain of death. The other demanded Yea, on the same condition.

The eye of that mysterious Being before whom the delegation stood had quickly pierced their very hearts, and his answer was ready. "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. †

The penny, he would say, is Cæsar's; it has his mark upon it; render it to him. But the soul is God's; it has his mark upon it; render it to him. Love and obey God, or you die; pay tribute to Cæsar, or you will suffer civil disaster, and witness the sudden and terrible fall of Jerusalem.

Deceit and artifice were nipped in the bud. The inquirers were instantly silenced, and, tendering him

* Matt. xxii. 16, 17. † Matt. xxii. 18–21.

their "reluctant homage of wonder," quietly went their way. "They marvelled at his answer," says the evangelist, "and held their peace." *

Failing in this attempt, the Scribes and Elders organized another strange convention, consisting, this time, of Pharisees and Sadducees, who, if possible, had less in common than the Pharisees and Herodians. The Sadducees were the ones sent. It was expected that upon religious questions they might succeed where, in political questions, the Pharisees and Herodians had failed. Their approach and intention were concealed under a plausible case of religious difficulty. A woman had seven husbands in this world; whose shall she be in the next? was the question. † The case was not happily devised, and was coarsely propounded. It was asked with the evident expectation, however, that the answer of Jesus might somehow compromise him, either with the ruling Pharisees or the common people.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for us fully to appreciate the critical position in which this personage from Nazareth was placed. Bear in mind, he was a young man, and his opposers were men of age and experience. The ideas of the nation were exceedingly conservative, and religious opinions were vigorously defended by the dominant class against all innovation. "He who even forgets a single point of doctrine," said Gamaliel, "may be esteemed on the road to ruin." It was an accredited and popular maxim, that "He who gives explanations not in conformity with traditions, shall have no part in the fu-

* Luke xxii. 26. † Matt. xxii. 23, seq.

ture world, even though he have done many good works." *

Such were the circumstances and conditions surrounding Jesus when waited upon by these keen, illiberal, and sceptical Sadducees.

The question that had been asked him was designed as a rigid test. He listened, heard them through, and then, without giving a direct answer, told those men who confidently denied future existence, that, with all their pretence to wisdom and philosophy, they were grossly ignorant, full of error, not knowing the Scriptures, or the power of God, which is able to make men live forever, even as the equals of angels.

The truths he presented were so new in form, yet so convincing, that the multitudes were filled with amazement. The Sadducees withdrew, acknowledging their defeat, and the people, says the evangelist, "were astonished at his doctrine." †

But one more, and a last, attempt was made to insnare him. We read, "But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together." ‡ What? Another conspiracy! Is it not enough that they had failed once, twice, yea, thrice, in their heartless and malignant onslaughts? Would not common chivalry have done him honor, rather than continue to plot his overthrow? So blinded and unfeeling were they, his enemies!

They selected for their agent in this attack a prom-

* Pirke Aboth. The summary of the moral portion of the Talmud.

† Matt. xxii. 33. ‡ Matt. xxii. 44.

inent lawyer of the city, delegating him to ask a question concerning the commandments.

There is something in the bearing of the lawyer which indicates a gentleman of refinement. There is "a sort of consciousness of the idle nature of all that casuistry and formality of which his question is the exponent." But it is a part of his professional business to be the servant of his clients, and as a politician, he must stand by his party constituents. He subserves, therefore, their bidding, and inquires, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" The remaining account, as given in Mark's Gospel, is concise and graphic.

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these. And the Scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." *

How penetrating the reply, and at the same time

* Mark xii. 29–34.

how delicate and gracious the concluding declaration of the Teacher!

The lawyer was deeply moved. Never before had he felt the force of the law of God, and the love of one's neighbor when placed upon the same sublime footing. He felt that his design had been completely traversed by a wisdom never before encountered. The church tradition is, that the lawyer from that date abandoned his former associates, and openly espoused the doctrines of Jesus; and it is also stated that the Pharisees were paralyzed by his desertion from their ranks. At all events, there is a sudden pause in their proceedings. Matters had gone on with them from bad to worse. Every moment saw the influence of Jesus rising in public estimation, and their own falling. He had thwarted and worsted them first and last, and completely. Their wits were at an end. They returned, those Scribes and Pharisees, those Sadducees and Herodians, from their private council-halls, and gathered about this strange being who had shown himself superior to every political and religious combination brought against him. His calm dignity awed every one into silence. Those who had thought to find in him a trickster or a fanatic, found themselves, unexpectedly, in the presence of one who thrilled them into profoundest veneration. The masses were awe-struck by his unexplained majesty. And while every eye was fixed, and while the evening shadows were closing about the temple, he broke the suppressed silence with this simple but suggestive question: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?"*

* Matt. xxii. 42.

The inquiry issuing from the preceding events of the day in question, and enforced by all he had said and done for nearly three years, bore a significance not easily evaded or soon forgotten. His foes could have refused an answer, but they stammered forth, "The son of David." They had answered correctly. The Messiah must be the son of David. The substance of Christ's reply is this: But what can David mean when he calls him Lord? How can he be son and Lord, unless there be a mingling or union of the divine and human? To this question no answer was attempted. As the silent gaze of those men met the eye of the Questioner, they began to quail before him. They seemed to feel that they were looking into a soul that was greater than any other, and that had never sinned. May it not be that they then felt for the first time "the full power of immaculate virtue"? Such the record. Has the like before or since been heard of?

How Jesus rose up on that occasion to answer every condition demanded! What other so perfect illustration of Emerson's partial faith? "We have a half-belief," he says, "that the person is possible who can counterpoise all other persons." Did not Jesus thus more than counterpoise the scores opposed? "We believe," continues this philosophical prophet, "that there may be a man who is a match for events, — one who never found his match, — against whom other men being dashed are broken, — one of inexhaustible personal resources, who can give you any odds and beat you. What we really wish for is a mind equal to any exigency."

May be, does Emerson say? Why not say there

has been one such, *only one such*, and he that — artisan.

Did he not, in matters involving the most delicate and difficult questions of civil polity, national religion, and moral law, withstand successfully, from morning light until evening shade, the concentrated learning, philosophy, wit, and malice of a whole nation's keenest representatives? Is there nothing here to excite our wonder? or what more of a "match" can philosophy require?

But the account of his day's work is not yet completed. Jesus did not hurry away from those scenes to feed, as most would have done, upon his successes and triumphs; there was no time for complaints or self-congratulations. His enemies must first listen to just but awful warnings. Their secret lives and ungodly practices, including their robberies of widows' houses, their rapacious, hypocritical, and bloodthirsty conduct, and their empty titles, must be laid bare before their eyes ere the Reformer can dismiss them; and they must hear, too, in language of deepest pathos, that, in consequence of these things, the utter desolation of their beloved Jerusalem is at hand.

In his closing words "the Accused, raising himself to his full height, becomes, in his turn, the accuser; like the hero of the Old Testament, he breaks like tow the interwoven bonds in which perverse sophists have sought to bind him, and crushes his foes with words more terrible than thunderbolts, which strike sudden light into the dark crevices of their hearts, and tear in shreds the veil of their mendacious pretences."

We look through the world's literature in vain for anything half so scathing and awful.

Those malignant priests and doctors were held up to such derision before the people, that now, after eighteen hundred years, we tremble while reading the language employed.*

The remaining words and deeds of that day, however, show that Jesus was not, in these moments of contention, beside himself. The composure with which the transition to other subjects was made is no less aston-

* It was to these denunciations Renan refers when saying, "Others but graze the skin; he carries fire and madness into the marrow and bones."

True it is, as De Pressense remarks, "that Pharisaism has never recovered from the wound it received that day in the temple of Jerusalem; formalistic hypocrisy, ever since that memorable discourse, has walked the world under a tattered veil. All the judgments pronounced against Jesus in the synagogue fail to counterbalance that terrible sentence with which he branded it, and which he left with it as his last farewell."

Recalling the circumstances, listen: "But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides! which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but

ishing than the overthrow of his opponents. While passing from the temple, he paused to call the attention of his disciples to a poor but faithful widow, who was seen casting her two mites, "all her living," into the treasury of the Lord.*

whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore, ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents [snakes,] ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 13–33.

* Luke xxi. 1–4.

Next he gave audience to a company of Greek proselytes, who had come to Jerusalem to worship the God of the Jews, and who had asked permission, through Andrew and Phillip, to see the One of whom every tongue in Jerusalem was then speaking.* Perchance it was the universal and "deep-seated presentiment," which had strangely attracted thither these and many other God-fearing Gentiles. A little later he withdrew from the courts of the temple, and wended his way to Bethany. Upon the summit of the Mount of Olives he paused to look back upon the fair but proud city. The sky was, most likely, cloudless. The moon was near her full, and on every hand there could be seen landscapes of attractive and marvellous beauty.

But this little circle of friends were not on that evening star-gazers, or sentimental worshippers of nature. They were absorbed by the continued announcement of startling truths and prophecies. The hours sped on far into night, and still parables, and entreaties, warnings, and revelations fell upon the ears of amazed listeners, and answers to awakened inquirers became so explicit that the disciples seemed to talk with one who commanded at will all the wisdom of God.† At length the company gathered their mantles about them, descended behind the shadows of the Mount of Olives, and sought repose in a friendly hamlet in Bethany.

Such is the record of a day in the life of Jesus; and this was but a specimen, and in some respects not so startling as many of those days which witnessed his mighty miracles.

During his ministry in Eastern Galilee, for instance,

* John xii. 20–36. † Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi.

he passed the whole of a certain night in prayer. At daybreak he extended a special call to four of his disciples; he then descended from the mountain, and was quickly thronged by the people, who "pressed upon him to hear the word of God." The masses came in such numbers that he could not eat bread. The dangers were so great that his mother and brothers expostulated with him, and his friends declared he was beside himself. He nevertheless continued his instructions, giving the parable of the sower, and that of the candle hid under a bushel, that of the earth as a harvest-field sown by the owner, also that of the grain of mustard-seed, together with a discourse on the manner in which we should hear the truth when presented.

In addition to this, there were special cases requiring advice, counsel, sympathy, and consolation, which were brought before him, and to which he gave personal attention, relieving the anxious and consoling the afflicted.

But his work during the day grew continually more arduous and complicated. He was called upon to silence the frightful voices of demoniacs, and when he had spoken, these distressed beings stood freed and unharmed before the people; he also healed the mother-in-law of the apostle Peter; and before nightfall his fame had so widely and rapidly spread that a whole city full of sick people had been gathered from every quarter.

Imagine the scene. Those who first received information quickly extended it to others. Men and women were seen hurrying hither and thither. Couriers were

despatched in breathless haste. Such rare and golden opportunities might never again come. What a universal response! Parents brought their consumptive children; children bore in their arms paralytic parents; a sister introduced a brother, blind from birth; mothers importuned him to touch their feeble and deformed children. What scenes followed! The lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the blind received their sight, the paralytic was restored to soundness, raging fevers gave place to the cool and perfect flow of health, and a bloom revisited the cheek emaciated by disease, for "he healed all that had need of healing." No wonder that the people "were amazed, and glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day." *

The evening had come. Human nature was just ready to yield from sheer exhaustion. The miracle-worker hastened on board a fisherman's skiff. No sooner had she cleared from shore than he sank upon the first convenient spot, and apparently not minding the hunger of a whole day, was immediately wrapped in slumbers so profound that the breaking of a mad hurricane upon the boat did not awake him. No wonder! Sleepless the night before, and without a moment's rest during the day past. "Blessed be thy rough sleep, O thou great benefactor! thou that art wearied and spent by thy particular works, and the virtues that have gone out of thee! What is it now to thee that the waters drench thee, and the fierce tempest howls in tumult round thee! Sleep on, exhausted goodness, take thy rest in the bosom of the storm! for

* Luke v. 26.

it is thy Father's bosom, where they that are weary from works of love may safely trust, and sink so deeply down into the abysses of sleep, that no thunder even may rouse them."

The terrified disciples awoke him. He arose, was nothing flurried, spoke, and the winds became whist as nightfall. Those on board were astonished, and exclaim, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Yes, he had slept like a tired man; he awoke like — what?

As we review these scenes, how strange and grand does the life of Jesus grow in its hold upon us! We have recounted the deeds of a day; but, seemingly, they are enough to fill a year. How sublime must have been the moments of such a life! What grand and holy activities, what ceaseless and unwearied acts of mercy! They are of such a nature and amount, that this single day full of them may have been thus minutely portrayed to disclose in what manner the Redeemer's ministerial life was employed, and to justify, if need be, "the noble hyperbole of the beloved apostle, that if the things which Jesus did should be written every one, 'the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.'" *

We can no longer delay with these more than enchanting scenes in his life. Enough, we think, has been said to establish the point in mind. A statement in brief is the following: —

These wonderful transactions, which are compassed in the space of two days, are so completely involved with his teachings and discourses, that if we attempt

* Ellicott.

to separate them, the one from the other, we at the same instant tear the entire web in sunder and into shreds. Historic odds and ends only are left. The same philosophy which denies the deeds must also deny the words; indeed, deny the incidents of the life, and also the entire life.

These historic connections are more than approximate; they are absolute and vital. These internal harmonies are more than accidental; they are unconditional and essential.

In these Gospels, then, we look upon one whom every page presents to the world as a Miracle-worker.* These great and grand deeds are not merely "a brilliant embroidery wrought on the plain web of the evangelical narrative; they pervade its warp and woof." This young man, of such rank and character as to provoke the most rigid scrutiny, performed his deeds, not in obscurity, but before the face and eyes of multitudes.

In open city court, in country village, in hamlets, in doorways, in streets, he paused, arrested attention, spoke his words, wrought his miracles, and then bade men look, and, if they would, sift what they saw to the bottom. The "scholarly Rabbi," the "proud Pharisee," the "free-thinking Sadducee," the "intuitional Essene," did look, study, examine, cross-question, and then confessed that notable miracles had been wrought.

This power of working miracles never forsook Jesus. It was no occasional grace, here to-day and gone to-morrow; it was not obtained by agonizing and

* Appendix, L.

praying for it; it was ever present; it was himself, and was put to the severest tests as to time, place, and occasion.

He stood before a closed grave, and in presence of anguish-stricken friends; he commanded the stone to be removed, and their tears to be dry. He then spoke a word, and his "voice thrilled into the dim infinitudes of death, and the soul of him who heard it" returned, reanimated the lifeless form, in which had already commenced decomposition, and he who had been three days dead came forth. The aspect of death had disappeared. The breeze from the hill-side blew off the smell of the grave, and he returned with his friends, and helped remove from his home the symbols and emblems of his own funeral.*

But a few months later Jesus himself was dead; his hands and his feet had been spiked to the cross; his heart was both broken and pierced; a sadder picture of death had never been borne to the tomb.

He entered those realms from which no mortal, however much he may have desired it, has been able to will a return.

Yet, after traversing the regions of death, until his purposes there were accomplished, he willed, returned, and took again the earthly life he had laid down, conversed with his disciples for forty days, restored their lost courage, and inspired a confidence that no power or authority on earth could ever after silence or appall.†

Thenceforth each faithless heart beat strong and full as if it "had been suddenly dilated with celestial courage; each lowly forehead seemed mitred with pente

* John xi. 1–46. † Appendix, M.

costal flame." Nay, more, Jesus, by his resurrection, inspired a faith in humanity which has made homes without number happy, soothed sick beds, cheered death-beds, and by enabling mortals to seize the otherwise extinguished torch of hope and life, and to relight it at the immortal fires ever kept burning upon his grave, has filled the hearts of millions with joy unspeakable and full of glory. What — are we standing at the grave, and in the presence of a mortal like ourselves!

II.

DIVINITY OF JESUS; APOSTOLIC OPINIONS.

AFTER the Gospels were completed, and Christianity was beginning to spread extensively, and men, both in and out of the church, had become hungry for more subject-matter and explanation respecting Jesus and his teachings, appeal was made to the apostles to answer many questions raised; and upon their knowledge of the facts and the authority of inspiration, they commenced the statement of their opinions respecting the things they had seen, heard, and felt while Jesus walked among them. It is logical, therefore, to pass, in our investigations, from recorded *facts* to recorded *opinions;* that is, from the Gospels to the Epistles.

It is necessary to admit, in the outset, that Jesus was not, during his earthly life, fully comprehended by the disciples; nor is this to be wondered at. Until thirty years of age, the man Jesus may not, in all respects, have comprehended himself; nor even then *fully*. Shallow, indeed, is the man who can fathom his own being.

But these admissions do not damage at all the list of important incidents recorded, or diminish in the least the weight of those sublime convictions expressed by those who were certainly better qualified than any others to express them.

No one, we dare say, will question the statement that the disciples, ever after their first introduction, believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he possessed relations to the supernatural which separated him by a vast distance from themselves and from all others.

Belief in his deity presented to their minds no difficulty. His humanity was what troubled them, and excited their constant and increasing wonder. The stories of his life, growing more and more marvellous, did not lead the disciples into the realms of supernatural legend and myth, but the opposite is true; the facts of his life, as they had witnessed them, and the reports of their inner consciousness, could find no other solution not loaded with numberless difficulties, except that of his supreme deity.*

In addition to this, "their views of his peculiar distinctions were ever on the increase." The marvellous and imaginary halo which surrounds ideal characters does not last when left to adorn real personages. Approaches to find perfection in any man are fatal.† Enchantments and distances are essential correlatives.

* Appendix, N.

† This appears very forcibly in some of the concluding statements of Dr. Legge in his Life and Teachings of Confucius. No modern testimony is more competent. "Somehow," says Legge, "Confucius is less a sage to me, after I

Not so with Jesus. The disciples marvelled from the start, and more, the more they saw and heard. Great things had been done by Jesus in their presence; wonderful beauties of character, year by year and day by day, had been unfolded; still the conviction of the disciples was ever deepening that there were in Jesus great and grand possibilities that had not, up to the close of his life, been actualized; latent heat, itself more marvellous than anything else on earth, was felt, but remained as in waiting to send forth its blaze or splendor. On this account they had faith in him, whatever were the existing circumstance or emergency. They laughed at the idea of any catastrophe befalling him. Though forewarned, they did not believe he would die; they thought he had spoken figuratively; so when death came, they were overwhelmed. Up to that hour they had no doubt that he was, in fact, the real Restorer of Israel.* It is by no means surprising, therefore, that these new and unexpected events blinded and appalled them. When they saw Jesus going to the cross, and lying in the tomb, no wonder they faltered. They were prepared for anything save such humiliation. But when he rose from the dead,

have seen him at his table, in his undress, in his bed, and in his carriage. . . .

"I must now leave the sage. I hope I have not done him injustice. After long study of his character and opinions, I am unable to regard him as a great man. He was not before his age, though he was above the great mass of the officers and scholars of his time. He threw no new light on any of the questions that have a world-wide interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had no sympathy with progress."

* Luke xxiv. 21.

reassured their hearts, and ascended on high, then their earlier faith was restored and intensified. Then it was that the truth fully dawned upon them. The enigmas were at once solved. The latent heat became a blaze, and flashed through his whole life the meaning constantly waited for by the disciples, and gave them complete understanding of hitherto unexplained realities; henceforth fact and belief, under the correction and impression of the Holy Ghost as the church claims, resolved themselves into established opinion and doctrine.

This belief in the resurrection of Jesus, which had for the disciples all the assurance of unqualified and absolute certainty, is, however, but one of many other exalted opinions which found early assertion, and which have all the appearance of springing from incontrovertible facts and the deepest and firmest conviction man is heir to.*

* No one, we presume, will, at this late day, ask for evidence to show that the resurrection was one of the primary and controlling opinions among the disciples. The conduct of the disciples finds in this faith its only possible solution. It was a subject upon which they never wavered in thought, so far as we can judge, and certainly not in expression. The testimony of F. C. Baur, who is one of the most resolute rejecters of supernatural Christianity, ought to be indorsed by all Liberals. "While historical critiscism," he says, "has nothing to do with the inquiry what the resurrection was in fact, it must hold fast to the assertion that, in the belief of the first disciples, it had become an established and incontrovertible certainty. In this belief, Christianity had gained a firm ground for its historic development. What must be presupposed as the essential foundation of this history is not

The disciples firmly believed, for instance, that Jesus, in his divine nature, was Creator of the universe. The statement of this opinion is so frequently made and presented under such variety and class of circumstances as to raise the fact of its prevalence above question.*

The apostolic belief that Jesus is the Saviour of men from sin and its consequences, through atonement in his life, sufferings, and death, is so completely both the foundation and superstructure of New Testament theology, that proof, or reference to proof texts even, is entirely unnecessary.

It was likewise as firmly held by the apostles that Christ should be regarded by men as the object of supreme worship. There is not, among the New Testament writings, the least hesitation upon this subject. Instead of anything like caution to the world in the very matter where caution should exist, if, indeed, it should exist at all, we find "emphasis, intensity, accumulation of epithets; the purpose of all being such as can find its reason in nothing short of the unconditioned meaning of those passages which bring the *Person*, *the Christ*, into view as the object of

the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, but the fact that it was believed he had risen. However we may seek to explain this faith, the resurrection of Jesus had become to the first Christians a fact of conviction, and had for them all the reality of an historical fact."

* Julian charged upon the Christians the error, as he thought, of believing that Christ was Creator. In his glowing style he says, "Jesus, as you will have it, made the heavens and the earth."

worship, even of the highest worship of which the human spirit is capable."

These grand thoughts respecting Jesus, the clear conviction of his deity, the mental difficulties involving his humanity, the fact of his resurrection, the appellations which can be applied to Divine Being only, yet freely applied to him, together with the honors paid him as Creator, Redeemer, and object of supreme worship, bring us into an atmosphere of belief and conviction charged with nothing less than the presence of God himself.*

* That the statement of the humanity of Jesus, in consequence, is only incidental in the Epistles, and that of his deity direct and positive, and the fact that, during the early years of church history, his divine wellnigh overshadowed his human nature, is, under the circumstances, precisely what might be expected. And such most certainly are the facts. "The men," says William Arthur, "who loved Christ with a love stronger than death, wrote his life, but left no hint of height, complexion, features, or of any point that could help the mind to a personal image. Others wrote long epistles, of which he was the Alpha and Omega; but his form was as much kept secret as the body of Moses, hidden by the Almighty in an undiscovered grave." (See Appendix, O.) "The Christian tombs and relics of the first centuries show no attempt to make an image of Christ. Too deep a sense of the Divine rested upon the early church to permit any attempt to print the human as it appeared in him."

Jesus himself, by his own example, gave encouragement to the course pursued by the disciples. He left no relic, and allowed the robe he wore to be divided among his enemies. He left no stroke of a pen; perhaps his autograph was never written. Alas, the Christian world has no epistle from his hand, bearing his signature! But perhaps it is best; we might fall to worshipping the epistle instead of its author;

Confining attention chiefly to the points of doctrine already enumerated, we may confirm the statements made by direct reference, and at the same time show the external or tangible ground of modern Christian faith.*

In this direct reference, the statements of the apostle Paul may receive, for obvious reasons, the first notice, though he confesses himself to be the last and least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle.

Paul's opinions, especially if we concede the point either of special or general inspiration, must have

at least there would be endless wrangling as to its genuineness and possession. But more than this, though Jesus showed devoted love for his mother while making provision for her support, still he would not have the world regard her as an idol or a goddess, even though she bore him, but would show that there were relations between them, though the most intimate, still the most infinitely diverse. This is seen in his reply: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" John ii. 4.

The few institutions and rites actually established by Jesus, it should be borne in mind, point clearly to relations which involve, not humanity, but deity.

* The thought is this: Aside from Christian consciousness, the church is in possession of data embraced in these facts of the Gospels, and the opinions and deductions in the Epistles. The certainty of the facts and the strength of the conviction upon which the opinions rest count much, nay, almost everything, in the estimate. If the facts stated are satisfactory, and if the apostles never hesitate in the expression of their opinions, then there is afforded the most satisfactory and reliable external data possible upon which to establish modern belief. What other basis exists, independent of Christian consciousness, save recorded and reasonable facts and unqualified contemporaneous opinion respecting their certainty?

attached to them, in the view of thinking men, an importance the most weighty. Judging him as we judge other remarkable persons, we must allow that he is "one of the greatest spirits of all time." *

He is very far removed from anything like affectation and sentimentality. His heart never flutters, and his head is always cool. Still he everywhere enters upon his work as if with the most profound convictions of its importance and reality, and as if moved to it by the sublimest heroism and inspiration.

He is the author of one third the New Testament, and his words and teachings, not being in the least overshadowed by the revolutions of time, have deeply thrilled, and will thrill forever, the souls of men. He had subtlety, tenacity, clearness, and rare versatility of intellect. His sentences are short, earnest, novel, but free from anything like pertness and egotism. His immortal utterances to the Christians of Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse constitute the theism of all modern civilization. We think it not extravagant to say that Paul is the Plato of the Christian world.

But in estimating the character and work of this

* The following testimonies will doubtless receive the hearty indorsement of every one: Renan speaks of Paul as "a man of rare intelligence, who formed for his lofty sentiments expressions of rare felicity."

"I think," says Coleridge, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans the most profound work in existence."

"We cannot but consider," says Channing, "the letters of Paul, with all their abrupt transitions and occasional obscurities, as more striking exhibitions of genuine Christianity than could have been transmitted by the most labored and artificial compositions."

great man, we should be much in error did we lose sight of the confession upon which he ever laid especial emphasis — that he was nothing of himself, and that all his true greatness was derived from *Another*.

With equal emphasis he asserts that he had not been taught the gospel by man's wisdom, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Such the character, qualifications and professions of this distinguished apostle.

Upon an examination of his writings, he will be found to express no hesitation in ascribing to Jesus

* "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." Gal. i. 11–24.

titles, attributes, and works which belong only to deity. Impressive are the following: "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords;" * "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever;" † the God who was "manifest in the flesh;" ‡ Before whom all must stand in judgment, and to whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess; § "The Great God and our Saviour;" ‖ "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth;" ** "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" †† and, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." ‡‡

If Jesus did not possess a divine nature, in the conviction of Paul, then this language merits, not our belief, but our intense derision.

Paul also presents Jesus to us as the Jehovah of the Old Testament dispensation. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord (Jehovah §§) Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." ‖‖

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." ***

* 1 Tim. vi. 15. † Rom. ix. 5. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16.
§ Rom. xiv. 10, 11; Phil. ii. 10. ‖ Titus ii. 10, 13.
** Heb. i. 10. †† Col. ii. 9. ‡‡ Phil. ii. 6.
§§ The word here translated *Lord* is the same that is translated in the Septuagint, *Jehovah*.
‖‖ 1 Cor. viii. 6. *** 1 Cor. x. 1-4.

According to Paul's Christology, the voice attended by the flame in the bush not burnt which spoke to Moses, the mysterious visitor whom Abraham entertained and to whom he prayed, the angel of the Lord with whom Jacob wrestled and prevailed, gaining the title Prince, the form of the fourth that stood in the blazing furnace with the three trusty followers of God, and whose face the king declared was bright like that of the Son of God, the angel of the covenant, the babe born in the manger, the man that spake as never man spake, and died upon a cross, was, in every instance, the same Being, the same Christ of God, whose mission it was to manifest to man the otherwise invisible Father.

In addition to this, Paul believed that Jesus was the world's atonement, and its sacrifice for sin. His language is unmistakable, and he everywhere abounds with the most glowing sentiments respecting this great doctrine. The following passages admit of no other interpretation: —

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." *

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." †

"Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us." ‡

"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission

* Eph. i. 7. † Heb. ix. 12. ‡ 1 Cor. v. 7.

of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." *

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." †

"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." ‡

In view of these, and many other passages which might be added, we solemnly believe the authority of Paul must be set entirely aside, or else we must look upon Jesus as the voluntary and expiatory offering of deity in behalf of humanity.

In summing up the opinions of Paul respecting the deity of Jesus, the depth of his convictions must not be overlooked. It was no mere sentiment, costing no effort, and for which he would undergo no sacrifice; his belief was his life.

His devotion to this doctrine is to-day inspiring to contemplate, and his labors in its behalf were Titanic. §

* Rom. iii. 24, 25. † Gal. iii. 13.

‡ Heb. xiii. 11, 12.

§ The extent of his labors can scarcely be over-estimated. "Among all nations," says some writer, "from the most civilized to the most barbarous, with all people, from the most enlightened to the most ignorant, — among the wandering hordes of Arabia, in the beautiful country of Asia Minor, amidst the bleak and barren mountains of Thrace, with the sceptical and philosophizing Athenians, with the corrupt and effeminate Corinthians, in the Eternal City, in Spain, even among the poor and superstitious islanders of Malta, — there was scarcely a discovered spot on the face of

We see him surrendering the national honors he had won, and others in waiting to be heaped upon him. We see him hastening from place to place, seemingly with the rapidity of a whirlwind, enduring all kinds of fatigue and exposure, and confronting all sorts of danger.* We see him working as tent-maker, subsisting upon bread, milk, and the cheapest vegetables, and then resolutely dying in defence of his belief — the belief being, that no qualification or limitation whatever to the supreme deity of Jesus could be for a moment admitted.

From Paul we pass to the opinions held by the apostle John respecting the superhuman nature of Jesus.

the globe where we do not find the footprints of this unwearied apostle, *everywhere at home*, everywhere prepared with views and arguments adapted to the habits and capacities of the people he addressed, everywhere preaching 'Jesus and the resurrection,' and 'becoming all things to all men, that he might at least save some.'"

* "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool), I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Cor. xi. 23-28.

No man in the world had such opportunities as he for forming, from original data, correct opinions. He was the disciple whom Jesus especially loved. He was regarded as the personal and most intimate friend of his Master. His writings show that he was not destitute of strong, clear, and general intelligence.

Gibbon says, "He is the most sublime of all the evangelists."

"John," says Jerome, "was at once apostle, evangelist, and prophet — apostle, in that he wrote letters to the churches, as a master; evangelist, as he wrote a book of the Gospel, which no other of the twelve apostles did, except St. Matthew; prophet, as he saw the revelation in the Island of Patmos, where he was banished by Domitian. His Gospel, too, differs from the rest. Like an eagle he ascends to the very throne of God, and says, "In the beginning was the Word."

"He was," says Professor Plumptre, "the '*Theologus*' of the whole company of the apostles."

No one, familiar with his writings, can fail to see that John was in possession of a sublimely spiritual insight into things divine, or fail to see that the image which, above every other, is the most clearly mirrored upon his soul is, beyond question, that of the Son of Man, who is also the Son of God. His personal reminiscences of Jesus are minute and distinct, and disclose to us, not one who had occasionally seen, but one who had been a constant companion of the Master.

His visions of the Eternal Word, made flesh and dwelling among men, are at once as unclouded as the nature of the subject allows, and truly sublime. His opinions in the first chapter of his Gospel are familiar

to all, and at the present stage of biblical criticism ought to be above controversy. Although they have been subjected to the most rigid analysis, they stand to-day, as ever, like an impregnable bulwark in evangelical faith.

Here we have clearly announced, though without explanation, the grand and well nigh startling doctrine that Jesus Christ was truly and fully God. Examine the word *Logos* upon both historical and grammatical grounds, and testing the introductory verses of this Gospel in all ways which are consistent with literary and exegetical criticism, we can reach no other conclusion than this — if John had desired to express, as his belief, that Jesus Christ was eternal, and was united with deity in such manner as to be God's real personality, he could have expressed himself in no other way so briefly, so directly, so clearly, and so well, as to say, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *

John's Apocalypse is scarcely less impressive in its disclosures respecting the position of Jesus than the announcement in his Gospel. What words are these, for illustration, to associate with man! "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive forever more, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." †

This the description of a mere man? Preposterous! "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things." ‡

* John i. 1. † Rev. i. 18. ‡ Rev. iv. 10, 11.

"And they rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." * This a man, like one of us!

"And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." †

"And the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings." ‡

Notice, these ascriptions of praise are paid, not to the Father or to the Spirit, but to Jesus, the Christ of God.

Does not this Being whom John thus presents to us stand in unique and solitary grandeur before and above the universe? And is it not singular that neither John, nor Paul, nor any other apostle, ever attempts, when thus exalting Jesus, to reconcile their faith with Jewish monotheism, to which they ever resolutely cling? But we here attempt no explanations.

It must now be clear to all that Jesus Christ, in John's Christology, is the God whose glory Isaiah saw in a vision, when it filled the temple and shook its foundations; § that he is "Alpha and Omega," ‖ the "true God," ** and at the same time "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." ††

Yes, John does assure us repeatedly that it is the blood of Jesus Christ alone which "cleanseth us from all sin," ‡‡ and that the fulness of the Godhead

* Rev. iv. 8. † Rev. xv. 3. ‡ Rev. xvii. 14.
§ Is. vi. 1, seq.; John xii. 41. ‖ Rev. xxii. 13.
** 1 John v. 20. †† 1 John ii. 2. ‡‡ 1 John i. 7.

constituted, by some means, the personality of the crucified Saviour. If such be not the impression the apostle wishes to convey, then are not these words he employs superlatively ridiculous, if not absolutely profane?

From John we pass to the views of the apostle Peter. Peter is known to have had faults enough to entitle him to a full share of human nature. Yet he is felt to have been a man of sterling and roundabout common sense. He knew enough of men and things not to have been easily duped in matters of general observation. He was no mystic; he was a man of the world, a practical fisherman. His character, too, was the remotest from that which hastily forms opinions, and doggedly clings to them, unless based upon the firmest foundation.

When, after years of companionship with Jesus, and after a deep personal Christian experience, he unqualifiedly writes to the Gentile world that Jesus "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God" (the place of supreme authority), "angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him;" * and when he says that glory and dominion ought constantly to be rendered to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; † and when he confidently assures his readers that Jesus "hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh;" ‡ and when he discloses to us the doctrine of the atonement in still more impressive language, enforcing the truth that we are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver

* 1 Peter iii. 22. † 1 Peter v. 11. ‡ 1 Peter iii. 18.

and gold," "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;" * and when, by figure and type, by reference to fact and prophecy, he presents Jesus to us as the one who is Shepherd and Bishop of souls, † whose kingdom is everlasting, ‡ and to whom glory must be forever ascribed, § — then is not what this apostle says the idlest babbling, or else is it not deserving of profoundest respect, if not of implicit belief?

Why need this subject longer detain us? When Nathaniel confessed, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel;" ‖ when Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God;" ** when Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached Christ raised from the dead, the Holy One, through whom is salvation; †† when Philip announced the same doctrine to the eunuch on the road to Gaza; ‡‡ when John, who possessed a deep and inspiring insight into the divine and eternal nature, comes from his retirement only to emphasize his belief more strongly; when Paul published the same grand truths to the world, both in Antioch and elsewhere; and when the disciples, as a body, preached the "kingdom of God" as identical with the "gospel of Christ," and presented Jesus to the world as the grand and glorious Messiah of Jewish thought and prophecy, and when they directed the whole church to invoke Jesus Christ as her Lord and her God; nay, more, when they stood ready to

* 1 Peter i. 18, 19.
† 1 Peter ii. 25.
‡ 2 Peter i. 11.
§ 2 Peter iii. 18.
‖ John i. 49.
** John xx. 28.
†† Acts ii. 24, 27, 38.
‡‡ Acts viii. 26, seq.

die, and *did* die, the most cruel deaths imaginable in defence of this faith, — are their opinions to pass for "idle songs," or ideas brain-born?

One may rise from the dead and bring reports; but can he persuade men, if this record of facts and opinions, resting upon conviction so overwhelming, fails to convince?

III.

DIVINITY OF JESUS; CONTEMPORANEOUS PUBLIC OPINION.

THE development of the general subject would be far from satisfactory or exhaustive, were no consideration given to early public belief, whether supporting or contradicting apostolic or church opinion.

That this class of recorded testimony is largely incidental and fragmentary by no means lessens its importance. Indirect or circumstantial evidence and testimony, especially when from a great number of sources, and when given under a great variety of conditions, as to both time and place, are no less convincing than if connected and direct.

And, also, that public opinion was not in all respects uniform, — often, indeed, contradictory, — is precisely what would be expected from the nature of the One concerning whom the opinion was formed.

If we are correct in previous estimates, Jesus seems to have been in possession of a human and divine, or a human-divine consciousness; the phenomena presented, if the supposition be granted, would not, of

course, be uniform; often, in fact, seemingly contradictory. Corresponding therewith should be the testimony.

Hence, too, the perplexity in which those who met Jesus were frequently involved, is in perfect keeping with both apostolic record and belief.

To illustrate this point, take a single occasion — that of the Festival of Tabernacles. The scene was in Jerusalem, and in one of the courts of the temple. Jesus had just come from Galilee. A vengeful storm had gathered around him. The malice of Scribe and Pharisee was no longer suppressed, but open. The inquiring multitude had witnessed his deeds, and listened to the words he spoke. We have, doubtless, in their various questions and replies, an expression of the conflicting thoughts which were on many other occasions working in the hearts of men. Notice especially the following sentiments taken from the account in question:* "And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews." (12–14.)

"And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (15.)

"The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil. Who goeth about to kill thee?" (20.)

"Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit

* John vii.

we know this man, whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." (25–27.)

"Then they sought to take him; but no man laid hands on him. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" (30, 31.)

"Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come?" (35, 36.)

"Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth, this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him." (40–44.)

"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them), Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They

answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house." (45–53.)

These expressions of various and conflicting elements of belief, doubt, and unbelief, — unbelief based, however, upon selfish interest and non-essential technicalities, — bear unintended yet overwhelming evidence that it was a Being, in the judgment of the people, of strangely anomalous nature, who, by word and deed, had so long perplexed them.

The popular wonder was often intensified by another fact. While Jesus seemed, to the multitude, every way qualified to fulfil the conditions of Messiahship, he continually did the things which disappointed popular hope, and declined to do what all desired, and absolutely refused to receive the national crown, when proffered him.

The Jews saw him, for instance, going from place to place, everywhere astonishing the inhabitants by his wonderful deeds and words, but were perplexed that first of all he served the poor, the afflicted and outcast, and would achieve no mighty deliverance for his own oppressed country. They said, therefore, We look for another.

They heard him speak before the great men of the nation, and elsewhere, with supreme majesty and authority, but were perplexed that he never once alluded to the Maccabees, pronounced no words of praise upon those who would perform patriotic and warlike deeds, and gave no hint, even the remotest, of how the restoration of Jewish polity and power could be effected.

They also heard his announcements that he was King, that he came on earth to establish the Everlasting Kingdom of Jewish prophecy, but they could not sufficiently wonder that, in face of all this, he associated freely with Roman tax-collectors; that he would not, on any account, despise the Samaritans; that he readily entertained heathen, and, on a single condition, forgave the most abandoned, whom the national law would have summarily executed. They heard these things, they were amazed; they said, This cannot be the mighty One who was promised. And then, in many cases, they went back, "and walked no more with him."

But these statements as to the nature of the testimony under review, and these admissions as to the frequency of popular doubt, prepare the way for a more direct emphasis of that popular faith, which ever and anon asserted itself in support of the exalted claims of Jesus and his disciples.

The visit and conduct of the shepherds, the adoration of the Magi, the alarm of Herod, and astonishment of the doctors in the temple, have their weight, more or less, in the general estimate; but, as they have been before alluded to, do not admit, in the present connection, of more than mention and reference.*

Other scenes, as we recall the life of Jesus, throng the memory. Notice a few belonging to the class of indirect evidence.

Of such is the cleansing of the temple — twice; once at the commencement,† and once near the close

* Page 198–200. † John ii. 13–17.

of his public ministry.* The One from Nazareth entered that temple, found it converted from a place of worship into a house of Mammon and merchandise.

Amid the astonishment of the bystanders and temple-police, he, single-handed, put a summary end to that mercenary desecration. He drove forth the sheep and oxen, overturning those tables of "unholy gains." And the brokers and traders fled as if it were the hand of God which had smitten them. We have, it is true, no record that they said, Jesus is divine; but, had they believed he were merely human, would they thus have yielded up the profits of their trade?

Recall another incident: his Scripture exposition in the synagogue of his native village. He stood, on that occasion, before those among whom he had learned his father's trade, and passed his youth. But those villagers found themselves suddenly overcome by surprise while listening to his discourses, and exclaimed, among themselves, "Is not this Joseph's son? and his brothers and sisters, are they not with us? Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" He, to them, was an unnatural and unaccountable phenomenon.

They of Nazareth were not blind enthusiasts, but they were appalled by the unheard-of conduct and words of a fellow-citizen. They could not comprehend how he had ventured from the lowest grades of society to those giddy heights on which he so firmly stood. Ordinary elevation they would have honored and applauded, but such startling traits bewildered them. They surmised he must be impostor, blas-

* Mark xi. 15, 16.

phemer, or Beelzebub, and therefore led him to the brow of the hill.*

Let us vary for a moment the form and class of testimony.

Nicodemus, both cautious and penetrating, and who, in his conservative and rigid investigations, would sift things to the bottom, confessed, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." † The woman of Samaria, too keen and wicked to be easily duped, also saw and heard enough to convince her that Jesus was the Christ who was to come. And they of her village believed also, "and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." ‡

The Roman nobleman, likewise, was so deeply impressed by the presence and power of Jesus, that he believed that the word, "Thy son liveth," which had been spoken in Cana, would restore his son dying in Capernaum. §

The military commander of the same city, whose servant was sick, and ready to die, said unto Jesus, "Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof. Wherefore, neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." ‖

And the afflicted woman who had spent all her property upon physicians, without benefit, "said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I

* Luke iv. 16–30. † John iii. 1–3.
‡ John iv. 42. § John iv. 46–54.
‖ Luke vii. 6, 7.

shall be whole." * The Syrophœnician woman, too, believed that a volition would restore her demonized daughter; and it did.

Martha, a woman of rare and practical good sense, whose marked characteristics are far removed from anything like sentimentalism, confessed, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." †

Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, said unto Jesus, "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." ‡

The multitude who followed him into the desert of Bethsaida, when they saw his miracles, exclaimed, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." §

And in the plains near Capernaum, on another occasion, a great multitude of people from Judea, Jerusalem, and from the sea-coasts of Tyre and Sidon, sought merely to touch him; so great was their faith that he could heal them. ‖

Demoniacs repeatedly hailed him as the "Holy One of God," and lepers by the road-side exclaimed, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." His political and religious enemies, of all foes the most blind and bitter, though they sometimes derided him with the taunt, —

> "A carpenter's apprentice! A mechanic!
> Whom we have seen at work here in the town
> Day after day; a stripling without learning, —
> Shall he pretend to unfold the word of God
> To men grown old in study of the law?" —

* Matt. ix. 21. † John xi. 27.
‡ Matt. ix. 18. § John vi. 14.
‖ Luke xi. 17–19.

yet more than once they trembled in his presence, not daring to execute an intended arrest.

And what a grand tribute of praise was that upon the occasion of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem! Then it was that the deep heart of the people seemed stirred as by supernatural enchantment; shouts of mysterious welcome were heard on every hand, — up from the valleys, and echoed back from the hill-sides.

The multitude remembered his deeds, "and began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen." * They then felt as never before the superhuman and God-like charm of his life; they proclaimed him king of the nation; they crowned him; they cast their robes in his way; "and the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." † And thus he entered the city, and the Scripture was fulfilled.

There were other occasions, also, and not a few, when the cloud parted so widely, and when the Supernatural Being burst forth so completely through the human covering of the Lord Christ, that all human din and doubt were silenced and banished; and the people heard a voice, as it had been thunder. ‡

His enemies, even when plotting his death, felt that there was a divine charm about his life. They would make his arrest, but employed Judas; not that they could not find Jesus; not that they did not know Jesus; but because they thought it would somehow

* Luke xix. 37. † Matt. xxi. 9. ‡ John xii. 29.

"break the spell that bound him," if they were assisted by one of his "intimate" companions. And when, in this manner, they, with a guard of soldiers, had gained his presence, those soldiers, who feared nothing so much as disobedience of orders, refused to advance, and fell to the ground awe-struck. Another company of bailiffs, too, who were sent to arrest him, and whose business was to arrest him, who had perhaps grown old in such service, returned, after a fruitless attempt, saying, "Never man spake like this man." He was to them no mere man. We cannot arrest *him*, was their confession, unless he voluntarily yields to our power.

And when he had allowed himself to be arrested, and led to trial, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled; when he "hung like a bruised flower, drooping on the cross;" and when the world and laws of nature, by rending her bosom and veiling her light, paid to his sad majesty and "divine innocence their funeral grief," — then, in public estimation, he died, not as man, but as something mysteriously more and higher than man.

So thought aloud the hard-faced soldier, "Truly this was the Son of God." As if he had said, I have seen men die, many of them, before now, — this is not a man. They call him the Son of God; I know not what this means, but — he is the Son of God.

All Jerusalem felt the force of this same conviction. That night, after Christ's death, was a night of terror throughout the city. That hour of awakening from the national intoxication and bewilderment, which had thrust upon the people this deed, left the pallor

of death upon despairing multitudes. That wild cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" bears overwhelming evidence to the strong reactions and appalling apprehensions which had settled down upon the nation. In the judgment of every reasonable being in that city, it was no mere man, much less a malefactor, who had been executed.

Officers, rulers, and people, even the bitterest of his enemies, bent the knee. And whole multitudes, whose hearts had not become rock, felt that it was Jehovah who had lately passed through the world.

IV.

DIVINITY OF JESUS; HIS PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

ALL that has been said respecting the superlative importance of this class of evidence in another connection * may here be reasserted and intensified. Are not his words, after all else is said, that which must remain for men an ultimate appeal?

In general there can be no question that Jesus, in a singular and solitary sense, separated himself from all men, and claimed for himself dignity and power, — "in a word, an elevation, both of nature and office," † such as no other man on earth has ever dared to claim.

But particularize, and the position is no less incontestable. Take, for illustration, the conditon of sinlessness.

If there be anything which lifts man above the ordinary sphere of humanity, it is freedom from sin; yet this was one of the claims of Jesus — a claim which has not in any instance been made by any pagan philoso-

* See page 194.

† Dr. Eliot.

pher or religious teacher of the past, or by any of the great and good men of modern times.

The life of Christ, we must remember, was not one of imaginary, but of real struggle and conflict. He had a human will, which could have rebelled, and have made him sinner as to his humanity if he had chosen. "Not my will, but thine, be done;" how strangely that falls upon the ear! Yet it gives intensified emphasis to the thought under consideration. "The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak," included his own flesh. "Tempted in all points as we are," admits of no qualification, save that on his part there was no sin.

All know that man is finite, feeble, and limited on all sides. Deficiency shows itself in his thoughts and deeds. It seems impossible for a mere man to attain absolute and pure goodness.

> "Few bring back at eve,
> Immaculate, the manners of the morn."

And when a man like ourselves sets himself up as a model, unparalleled, incomparable, a universal standard, by whom all goodness is exhausted, then we are forced to say, Thou art either a supreme hypocrite, or a being more than human.

But such were the professions of Jesus. Though there was struggle, severe and fierce, yet, according to his own declaration, there was in every struggle conquest, noble and sublime. "Who convinceth me of sin?"* was his challenge. "I am come to fulfil the law,"† and "I have glorified thee on the earth, and

* John viii. 46. † Matt. iii. 17.

have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," * were his unqualified assertions. †

How terribly did Jesus denounce hypocrisy! Yet he claimed that he was the light of the world; that he did nothing except in harmony with the Father Almighty; and that the prince of this world had nothing in him. ‡

Though in the likeness of human flesh, and his humanity being real human flesh, still he claimed to be so united with Deity, that he was freed from every moral impurity inherited from his mother, and stood before the world professing that God himself is no purer.

If he were thus sinless, he was divine; if he were not, then this outcry of his against hypocrisy, and these exalted personal claims — do they not make him earth's supreme arch-hypocrite? §

* John xvii. 4. † See also John vii. 18. ‡ John xiv. 30.

§ This claim of Jesus to sinlessness found echo in the hearts of those who knew him best, and is also supported by every sort of evidence, and by ample testimony. The apostles announced him as the one without fault or sin. 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb iv. 15.

Though upon familiar terms with publicans and harlots, still his worst enemies never breathed suspicion against his spotless innocence. This speaks volumes when we remember that even a Francis of Assisi, a Vincent de Paul, and the holiest of saints have been vilified. See De Lammenais, also Farrar.

The Toldoth Jeschu, with all their blasphemers, charge him with no sin, save one — his claim to be the Son of God.

Judas, with as keen an eye to read men as ever mortal possessed, after an intimate acquaintance for three years at the

But again, it must be apparent to all that Jesus not only fully understood Old Testament type and prophecy, but that he also uniformly applied the same to himself. In this he took the boldest step it was possible for one to take. Notice the force of this consideration.

Jesus was well aware that the great and immovable truth which the Scriptures had displayed in unmistakable clearness and splendor, was, that God would dwell on earth and in human flesh.

He understood perfectly well, also, that the Hebrew prophetic idea was, that this "Immanuel," God in the world with man, "the Teacher of the ages, the future Master of human thought, the perpetual Ruler of human opinion, the future Judge and universal King," was Messias, who was to come; and yet, knowing this, Jesus continually, unhesitatingly, and unqualifiedly represented himself as the one, and the only one of whom the Scriptures had thus testified.

He did more. He employed external and internal

head of the department in which corruption always first appears, — the treasury, — exclaimed to priests and rulers, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." "Have nothing to do with that *just man*," said the wife of Pontius Pilate to her husband. And Pilate himself, "when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him." Luke xxiii. 13–15.

And later still, washing his hands, he exclaimed, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." Matt. xxvii. 24.

evidence in support of his claims. He spoke and taught as if the entire Christology of the Bible depended upon his being the Christ. Son of David he claimed to be, and David's Lord. Not the son of a man, but son of humanity, by a human mother.

If we include the New Testament statements as a kind of interpretation of the Old, keeping in mind the use and appropriation Jesus made of them, we shall be the more deeply impressed with the significance of his exalted and sublime claims to divinity. It amounts, in fact, to his selection of the highest and purest types in every realm to be his representatives. In nature, he is the "Lily of the valley," the "Rose of Sharon," the "Bright and Morning Star," the "Rock," and its "Shadow," and the refreshing "Fountain;" in the political field he is the "Governor," the "Prince of Peace," "Lord of lords," "King of kings," and "Wonderful" "Counsellor;" and in theology, he is the "Ransom," "Redeemer," "Mediator," "Priest," and "Prophet," the "Brightness of the Father's glory," the "express Image of his Person," the "Wonderful," the "Ancient of Days," "Sun of Righteousness," "Jehovah," "Jehovah of Hosts," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "God with us."

These appellations accumulate as we continue our investigations. Jesus, in the Scriptures, is called God, or by a name implying it, no less than fifteen times.

Seventy-seven times is he called Lord, and One with the Father, seventeen; ten times are the same things spoken of him as of God, and fifty-two is he presented as an object of worship. In fifty-eight places is he spoken of as Saviour, in fourteen as Re-

deemer, in fifteen as possessing eternal life, in fifteen as Giver of eternal life, in seventeen as Judge of the world, in twenty as the Bestower of rewards, and in twenty-four as the Executer of the punishment of the wicked.

Such of these claims and titles as were in use before his birth he unqualifiedly applied to himself, and those that came into use at subsequent dates, he directly and indirectly authorized.

He thus, in one way and another, calmly gathered up all the separate and wandering rays of prophecy which had sparkled through the divine word, as well as its more manifest declarations, and then unfalteringly announced himself the only one upon whose head could be concentrated this sacred halo. Surely never did any other man claim so much as he.

We are aware that not a few non-evangelical Christians (this term in courtesy only is allowed) assert that whenever Jesus employs these exalted terms, he also, and in the same connection, speaks in other terms, and acknowledges his dependence.

"I confidently challenge the Bible student," says Dr. Eliot, "to adduce a single passage of Scripture where Christ speaks of himself in this exalted tone of authority and divine communion, in which he does not with equal distinctness declare that he spoke, and worked, and lived by the will and power of Him whom he uniformly declared to be the only true God, the infinite and almighty Father."

True; and we would not have it otherwise. But while admitting this, may we not politely, yet as confidently, ask Dr. Eliot, or any one else, without the formality of offering the challenge, to show that it was

not likewise as customary for Jesus, whenever he made special mention of his human nature and dependence, to indicate, in the same connection, with equal distinctness his divine nature, and his complete, nay, absolute independence?

Did he stand as a tax-payer before the Roman deputy? Yet the tribute was demanded of a fish from the sea, and the demand was immediately honored.* Did he desire fruit from the fig tree? He spoke, and the fruitless tree withered as if smitten by one of the bolts of God.† Did he ever and anon betray physical weakness and disappoint the expectations of his followers?

John the Baptist had been thrown into prison. Thus suddenly interrupted in his work, and not finding intervention from Jesus for his deliverance, he was perplexed, and sent to know if he were the promised One. The account is brief and explicit. We may be as sure that the words were uttered, "as if our ears had heard them."

"And John, calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

"And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus, answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,

* Matt. xvii. 24–27. † Matt. xi. 12, seq.

the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." *

What profession could be more deliberate and undeniable? Nay, in all his humiliation, Jesus was a professed and independent miracle-worker.† He claimed to be able to feed "five thousand persons" with "five barley loaves and two small fishes." ‡ He claimed, in numerous instances, to be able to heal sicknesses by a word or touch. He claimed to heal infirm men, § and blind men, ‖ and demoniacs,** and to raise to life dead men.†† Do not actions outspeak words?

He also professed to forgive sins; but "who," the people well asked, "can forgive sin but God alone?" ‡‡

* Luke vii. 19–23.

† The sceptics of the second and third centuries, Julian, Porphyry, and Celsus agree in one thing — that Christ *professed* that he worked miracles; they said he did these things by magic. And respecting this personal claim, Jesus stands quite alone in the world. The wonderful powers attributed to St. Francis Xavier were never professed by himself; he goes so far as to ridicule the instance where he was supposed to have resuscitated a dead infant.

Mahomet positively disclaimed miraculous powers. Those attributed to him in later legends — for instance, that referred to by Tholuck, where the moon, after seven times going round the Kaaba, saluted him, entered his right sleeve, and, slipping out at the left, split into two halves, which reunited after having retired to the extreme east and west — pass for what they are worth, with but slight credit to the prophet. See also Appendix, L.

‡ Matt. xiv. 13–21; Mark vi. 30–44; Luke ix. 10–17; John vi. 1–14.

§ John v. 1, seq. ‖ Matt. ix. 27, seq. ** Matt. viii. 28, seq.
†† Luke vii. 11. seq.; John xi. 1–46. ‡‡ Luke v. 21.

"If I, with the finger of God," he exclaimed in presence of the enraged Scribes and Pharisees, "cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." *

But it is further objected that Jesus professed to be "Son of Man;" and the rejoinder follows, Is there not in that term implied humiliations and limitations? That the term was employed there can be no question,† and likewise no question that it connects Jesus, not with a race of beings above men, but unites him indissolubly and forever with humanity; nay, he of Nazareth was no incarnate angel.

The theory of God-man, however, suffers by these admissions no embarrassment, but gains thereby much force, especially when noting in what strange connections this appellation occurs. They are such, really, as to occasion scarcely less surprise than any other terms employed, whatever be their connections.

It is the "Son of Man" who "cometh at an hour when ye think not." ‡ It is the "Son of Man" who is "Lord also of the Sabbath." § It is the "Son of Man" who "hath power on earth to forgive sins." ‖

* Luke xi. 20.

† Yet it may be well to notice, though Jesus frequently designates himself thus, that no one else in the Gospels ever ventures to employ the title when addressing him.

The force of this term, on prophetic grounds, may be seen by reference to the Book of Daniel, where it is said of the mysterious Son of Man, that "there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 14.

‡ Luke xii. 40. § Luke vi. 5. ‖ Matt. ix. 6.

It is the "Son of Man" who "shall send forth his angels," "at the end of the world." * It is the "Son of Man" who shall be seen hereafter, "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." † Unnatural and utterly unintelligible is such language if Jesus Christ were merely *a* son of man.

Nor must we give exclusive emphasis to the term "Son of Man," for there still remains unexplained the title "Son of God." The most daring and reckless criticism cannot deny that Jesus claimed to be the "Son of God" in ways and under circumstances which are, to say the least, singularly peculiar.

The Jews clearly understood him to teach that he was not *a* son of God, but "*the* Son of God." It was for this claim, which made him in Jewish estimation of the same nature as God, that they attempted to kill him. This, to them, was blasphemy, and it *was* blasphemy unless he possessed and could wield all the attributes of Jehovah.

Notice also in what solemn connections Jesus calls himself "Son of God."

"He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." ‡ "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." § "And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answereth thou nothing? what is it which these witness

* Matt. xiii. 39, 41.
† Matt. xxvi. 64.
‡ John iii. 18.
§ John v. 25.

against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy." *

Jesus asked the blind man if he believed on the "Son of God," † and approved Peter when he confessed, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God;" ‡ and he did not reprove Thomas when, under deep and special conviction of the truth, he said, "My Lord and my God." §

But the terms employed and the titles applied find clear interpretation, if we group much else which Jesus directly and indirectly professed of himself.

When he treats the law of God as if it were his own, saying, "Ye have heard it said . . ." "But I say unto you;" when he claims to be the Judge of all men, the Lord of God's vineyard, the only way in which men can come to God, the only embodiment of truth in a world of error, the only infallible interpreter of God in a world where search is ever baffled; when he affirms that he is the Founder of a universal and everlasting kingdom, and the Author of a new moral creation; when he says that all things are henceforth intrusted to his hands, and that no man on earth is

* Matt. xxvi. 62–65.
† John ix. 35.
‡ Matt. xvi. 16.
§ John xx. 26.

great enough to comprehend him, the comprehension of the Father Almighty being no more difficult; * when he represents the shedding of his blood as the world's only redemption from sin, † and his words as more enduring than heaven and earth, ‡ and his personal and vital presence as being with all his followers in all time to come; § when he asserts that the time is on the wing in which, he, as King, shall appear in the glory of God, with the angels of heaven, and give to mortals the reward of their works, ‖ and assign the kingdom of heaven to those prepared for it; ** when he repeatedly claims to be a child of eternity as well as of Judea, and to be in possession of a conscious and distinctly-remembered pre-existence, †† when he speaks of God and himself as one, and in connections which manifestly imply the most intimate familiarity and perfect equality; ‡‡ and when he challenges all these honors and prerogatives, not in exceptional passages, but so frequently as to give general tone to the Gospels; when we find ourselves unable, by any degree of critical boldness and ingenuity, to expurgate these claims, and leave enough of the New Testament to save from destruction the personal history and existence of the one for whom it was written; nay, more, when we mass all these facts, — are we not compelled to charge upon him reckless ostentation and blasphemous presumption, or else, discovering in these professions a

* Matt. xi. 27. † Matt. xxvi. 28.
‡ Matt. xxiv. 35. § Matt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 18.
‖ Matt. xvi. 27. ** Matt. xxv. 34.
†† John iii. 13, xvi. 28, 29, xvii. 5.
‡‡ John v. 17, xiv. 9. v. 23, x. 22–31. Matt. xxviii. 19.

partial interpretation of the titles before employed, must we not say that Jesus felt beyond a doubt that there was connected with him an essential substance, which in no respect differs from deity?

Ay, more than this even, must not that Galilean artisan have been the basest of deceivers, or filled with the grossest ignorance, or else have possessed the perfectly clear conviction that he was essentially, nay, really — God?

V.

EARLY CHRISTIAN OPINION.

IT is of no trifling importance to know what opinions respecting Jesus were entertained while Christianity was sending its early morning blush over every part of the Roman empire. We have, fortunately, quite definite reports respecting the views of devout and intelligent men who were comparatively near the life and times of Jesus. In some instances they obtained definite facts and general information from first hands, and upon these, in connection with their own Christian experience and consciousness, formed their opinions.

Next in point of importance to the views of the apostles should consideration be given, upon natural grounds at least, to those of the apostolic fathers, and indeed, to the great body of believers who followed the fathers, and were considered Christians in the apostolic sense.

Among the earliest of these, whose writings were of note and influence, may be mentioned Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus.

In their time Christianity had comparatively little to do with scientific or philosophic statement. The Theological School of Alexandria, which at a later time foisted upon Christianity various tenets of the prevailing philosophical systems, had not been established. The dawn-light of the age of doctrinal formulæ which arose a little later, was scarcely yet discernible. It was a time of calm and childlike reliance, in which, however, there was by no means a "full consciousness of the treasures of truth committed to it." It was, in fact, the closing period in the age of simple faith.

As might be expected, there were, at the time, especially in the church, scarcely any discussion respecting the essential divinity of Christ, the Trinity, or the Personality of the Holy Ghost. These matters were not, within the church, called in question. In other words, the conviction that Jesus was a supernatural and divine being was wrought so thoroughly into the universal Christian consciousness that discussion and definition were deemed improprieties, and the simple New Testament language was regarded as authoritative, sufficient, and satisfactory.

When the Scriptures attributed to Christ eternity of existence, omnipresence, and omniscience, or omnipotence, or when, in the various New Testament formulæ of benediction and baptism, Christ was associated with the Father and Spirit in terms of equality, those early Christians accepted the statements, were satisfied with them, attempted no formal analysis; and consequently it should excite no surprise or difficulty that they did not reduce their belief to scientific statement. And much less should this absence of specific dogma

be construed into argument against evangelical faith. There is not the remotest ground for the claim that early Christian belief was not intense; it was intensest. Beliefs are always stronger than statements, and strongest when evidence is so overwhelming that no formal announcement or explanation is thought of.

And more than this; those doctrines which involve the divinity of Jesus, though in no way formulated, did, nevertheless, in an informal way, literally pervade all the writings of early Christians. Their songs breathe this thought, their sermons are filled with it, and their homilies are based upon it. "This faith had been decidedly asserted," says Guericke, "by the greater part of the church, although it had not always been enunciated and defended with strict accuracy and self-consistence."

Investigations in the province of Monumental Theology which are at the present time justly attracting no small degree of attention, show, also, that Christ, in his divine character, was really the central figure in the early church representation. He appears as the Ichthus, the Shepherd, the Alpha and Omega, the Eternal One, the Creator and the Final Ruler.

Again, indirect and incidental statements are, as before shown, in strength and force, often equivalent to direct representation. When Porphyry tells us that Christians "worship Christ as God;" when Hierocles makes his formal charge against Christians, "You hold Christ to be God because he is reported to have restored a few blind men to sight, and to have done some other works of like kind;" and when Pliny, in his account of the early Christians, mentions "a hymn

which they sing to Christ as to a God," — their statements have all the force of direct assertion. Perhaps this is an instance where the indirect is even more satisfactory than the direct; at least it would have answered the purpose no better had they said in so many words, These early Christians believe that Christ is God.

The same is true respecting other doctrines of the church since formulated. When we read, in the old epistle to Diognetus, that God gave "his Son a ransom for us;" when Clement of Rome speaks of Christ's "righteousness covering our sins;" when Ignatius calls attention to the "God-blessed passion;" when Justin Martyr tells us that "Christ bore the suffering of the whole race of man;" and when Irenæus alludes to the "Divine Son of Man, truly God and man, coming with voluntary self-sacrifice," — we have all the evidence that any one in reason can demand necessary to establish the fact that the early church held the doctrine of vicarious atonement as really and tenaciously as it is held by the most orthodox churches of modern times.*

Mr. Parker was willing to concede, without controversy or qualification, that the Christ of the Gospels, as believed in by the infant church, was a supernatural or a superhuman Being. The language of Francis Newman is likewise very explicit. "All Christen-

* We find similar expressions among the later Apologists. Tertullian alludes to Christ as "the Universal Priest of God." Cyril of Jerusalem says, "Christ took *our* sins in his own body." Cyril of Alexandria claimed that Jesus "destroyed by his cross the sentence of the old curse." Similar statements are found in Athanasius, Augustine, Ambrose.

dom," he says, "between the dates of A. D. 100 and A. D. 1850, with the exception of small eccentric colonies, has held Jesus to be essentially superhuman.*

But, as more time intervened between the gospel facts and the advancing church, and as men's thoughts began to work upon the great problems involved, there

* The statements of Irenæus and Tertullian ought to settle all controversy respecting the attitude of the early church. Irenæus gives the following as the belief of those "who diligently keep the ancient tradition:" "Believing in one God, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things in them, by Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who, through his most eminent love towards his creature, underwent that generation which was of a virgin, he by himself uniting man to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and risen again and taken up in splendor, will come again in glory, a Saviour of them that are saved, and a Judge of them that are judged, sending into eternal fire the perverters of truth, and the despisers of his Father, and of his own coming again."

Tertullian also gives the following as "the rule that had been observed and adhered to from the very beginning of the gospel," — and it was "prior to all heretics that had been in the Christian church:" "Belief in one God, and that his Word was the Son of the one God; who proceeded from him; by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made; that he was sent by or from the Father into the virgin, and from her was born Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and named Jesus Christ; that he suffered, that he died, that he was buried, according to the Scriptures, and raised up by the Father, and, taken up into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the quick and the dead; who from thence sent, according to his promise from the Father, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier of their faith who believe in the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost."

was a striving instinctively, and with more or less directness, after a correct and intellectual statement of Christian faith.

In these efforts commenced the development of the dogmatics of ecclesiastical history. It should not be overlooked that near the close of the second century, and especially at the beginning of the third, philosophy was almost entirely confined to the church. As might be expected, nay, from the nature of things as would inevitably be the case, Christian teachers, particularly those versed in Platonism, were constantly occupied in various attempts to express, in dogmatic form, the early apostolic faith. And that sentiment respecting Jesus which is common to every true Christian, that pious instinct, we mean, which tells the regenerated soul that there is perfect equality between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and which as confidently asserts that there is but one God, would naturally be almost the first subject to receive attention, and be one of the first to be involved in ecclesiastical controversy.

It should also be borne in mind that Christianity was, at the start, a new religion, and, as such, illegal. Though the period was remarkably lenient to all systems, still there were limits even to this Roman toleration. Public sentiment, through misunderstanding and misrepresentation, was not long in ripening into popular and political hatred; thence followed civil persecutions. But persecutions in a general way lead to definite positions, and compel definite statements; hence also the rise of church dogma and formula.

Again, during the first centuries there were sceptics and scoffers, as there had been in the time of our Sa-

viour, and as there have been ever since. From this source came the written attacks against Christianity.*

As soon as these writings appeared, Christian scholars came forward in vindication of their views, which had been thus assailed. The defence took either the form of a statement and exposition of the doctrines of Christianity for the use of the common people, or was of an official character, a sort of plea for the new system before emperors and subordinate rulers; the effort being in this case to correct the judgment of civil authorities respecting the new religion and its adherents.

But in either instance, a measurably clear and definite statement of Christian faith was demanded, and the requirement, so far as possible, complied with. In the main, however, these efforts were apologetic rather than expository.

A brief survey of the later historic fields upon which Christian truth took dogmatic shape, at the same time resulting in the development of church heresies, which are often the merest differences of opinion, is all that is necessary to our purpose, and all that our limits allow.†

A few facts recalled to mind will throw needed light upon the condition of Christianity at that early period.

Converts were from both paganism and Judaism; but Grecian and Israelitish culture were throughout antagonistic. Christianity thus stood, in a sense, between paganism, which admitted many gods and distinctions, and Judaism, which admitted no distinctions whatever in the divine nature. Here, then, between the two extremes, would, of necessity, be waged a war of conflicting opinions within the church itself the

* Appendix, P. † Appendix, Q.

moment any attempt was made to reduce Christian consciousness to formal statement; there would also result to either party, upon the presentation of the views of the other, uncertainty and obscurity.

As might be expected, differences respecting the *person* of Christ arranged themselves into three distinct classes. First, admissions of a real human nature, involving tendencies to explain away the divine; second, admissions of a divine nature, involving tendencies to explain away the human; third, admissions of both a human and divine nature, involving various attempts, many of which will not abide the test of strict scrutiny, to unite the two natures into one unit or unity.

The dogmatic notion quite prevalent among the Jewish Christians that Christ was human, — literally in the line of David, — but that he was made divine by some spiritual elevation, corresponds with the first class. The Nazarene and Ebionitish sects show how prevalent were these ideas.

But, on the other hand, the Gentile Christians, especially those who retained their Dualistic and Gnostic notions, naturally entertained dogmatic opinions in direct antagonism to those above stated, and fall under the second class. To the converted pagan philosopher the easy solution of all involved difficulties would not be in elevation, but in emanation: with this idea he had been familiar from childhood. Hence there was more frequent doubt respecting Christ's humanity, than divinity from all quarters where Gnosticism had prevailed.

Clement of Alexandria, for instance, held that the body of Jesus was not sustained by ordinary agencies,

but by the Holy Ghost. Origen ascribed to his humanity qualities which would remove him in every respect from ordinary human nature. The Docetæ flatly denied Christ's humanity, making of it "a mere vision," the "phantasm of a body," but gave all prominence to the supernatural and real element in Christ's appearance.

Not far removed in essence is this view from the Manichean system, whose dogmatism was the natural outgrowth of an effort to blend Christianity, not with Gnosticism, as above, but with the religions of ancient Asia. These Manicheans were Buddhist-Zoroastrian-Christians. They believed Christ to be God truly, but man in appearance. The Son of God came and took the form of man. He appeared to men as a man, though he was not man. He was not born, because God could not be born; this supposition they thought dishonorable to him. He was, therefore, pure deity; he was God the Father.

These Manicheans were also self-consistent in holding that Christ's death was not real, but a semblance. Manicheanism appears, then, to have been a vigorous effort to preserve intact, at any doctrinal cost, the unity of divine consciousness.

Without much difficulty we may bring under the third class the "modification theory," represented by Paul of Samosata, though it may with almost equal propriety be referred to the first class. Jesus, according to this view, was a man, but had united with him a divine influence, an *inspiration* of God.

But this divine part was "God before ages." Jesus was, therefore, "God-perfect according to nature and

truth, and not first man, and then God, but first God, and then becoming, or coming into man for us."

A clearer type belonging to the third class is Sabellianism. This term has come to be a general designation, covering all those who deny that there is more than one person in the Godhead, and who claim that the Son and Holy Spirit, though divine, are only different operations of one God, the Father almighty.

The Christology of Sabellianism involves the following leading points: The Godhead of Father and Son were originally derived from the same source. Father and Son are, in essence, *adelpha*, of the same brotherhood. The Son was *Theau-thropos*, God-man, — incarnate Logos. The essential personality of the Godhead was regarded as absolutely permanent, though *relatively* transitory.

Sabellianism was, from the outset, it will be seen, the antithesis of the Nazarean views respecting Christ, and was started in opposition to them. It was comparatively free from the cant of pagan schools and foreign philosophy; in many respects the doctrine seems to do no violence to, but to harmonize with, general Christian consciousness.

It is the opinion of not a few thinkers, that if the views of Noetus and Beryllus, as systematized in Sabellianism, had peaceably taken possession of the church, Christianity would have been much earlier and far more correctly defined than it was under the handling of the Gnostic and Platonic fathers.

The opposition to these Sabellian theories came at first, as might be expected, from the polemic school of Alexandria. It found such representatives as Diony-

sius, Athanasius, Basil, and Hilary. It was carried so far as to charge upon Sabellius the guilt of blasphemy against the Father Almighty, of which at heart he was as innocent as any who opposed him.

The system which may be regarded as the direct antithesis of Sabellianism was made up of certain Alexandrian views, which later, under the handling of Arius, became Arianism.

Arianism, in its Christology, placed the Son at the head of finite beings, and gave him a beginning before the beginning of all things temporal.*

The idea of *unit*, in distinction from the true Trinitarian idea of *unity*, led to the unfortunate mistake of Arianism, towards which, it is true, the system tended. We find it soon siding over into those regions where no partitions in the God-head could be allowed; hence three separate essences were claimed; triunity was abandoned, and tendencies towards tritheism and polytheism began to show themselves, and consequently and very properly the system awakened opposition.

We are now brought to the heart of the polemic period in church history (250–730 A. D.), and to the great ecclesiastical Council of Nice (325 A. D.).

The events which then transpired are, in some respects, the most famous and interesting presented to us in the entire range of ecclesiastical history, but in other respects they are the most humiliating.

* Origen would have embraced this view, in all probability, had not his philosophy required him to make God immutable, which, in his mind, meant that the Son, and everything else as well, must be without beginning. Christ, in Origen's view, was eternal, but no more so than the dust beneath his feet.

Platonism, as we have already seen, prevailed in all the scientific and practical theology of the day; and a giant must be the man who could cope successfully with those devout, acute Gnostic and Platonic leaders and educators of the people.

The details of the difficulty between Arius and his bishop, the calling and assembling of the council, the sharp controversy between Arius and Athanasius, are matters of intensest interest; but anything like a critical review is precluded from our discussion; the general features only can be noticed, and that briefly.

There appeared in the council three classes of opinion, known as Arianism, which found its representative and advocate in Arius; Semi-Arianism, which was under the leadership of Eusebius; and Athanasianism, or the so-called orthodox party, which recognized the young and talented Athanasius as its leader. In one point of view the three parties stood together; that is, they were united in their opposition to Judaism on the one hand, and paganism on the other. But in other respects, the views entertained seem decidedly antagonistic.

The essence of Arianism, as represented in the council, consists in making Christ subordinate to God in some respects, chiefly in those growing out of the view that he was a *created* being. Notwithstanding this idea of the creation of Christ, the position assigned him by Arius is one of superlative grandeur. To say that Christ possessed antecedent existence, massive greatness of soul, or that he was superhuman or supernatural, would not be sufficiently strong statements to express the view of Arius.

Some idea of the approach Arius made towards modern orthodoxy may be gathered from the fact that he willingly indorsed the creed first presented to the council — that of Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea. It reads, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, both visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, the Only-begotten Son, the First-born of every creature, begotten by the Father before all worlds, by whom also all things were made, who, for our salvation, was made flesh and lived amongst men, and suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come in glory to judge the quick and the dead. And I believe in one Holy Ghost. Believing each of these to be and to have existence, the Father only the Father, the Son only the Son, and the Holy Ghost only the Holy Ghost." *

* It is of interest to bear in mind that this creed, to which Arius raised no objection, was the creed of the church in Palestine; it had probably been handed down — at least the basis of it — from those primitive churches planted by the hands of the apostles. And it is intensely interesting to notice the close resemblance it bears to the expression in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;" it also harmonizes with the articles of faith held by one of the largest bodies of modern Christians: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead, there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the

So much being admitted by Arius respecting the deity of Christ, it is matter of no surprise that he did not, in that age of dogmatic construction, abandon his opinions, though he allowed some verbal changes to be introduced. Nor do we wonder that his views under the title Arianism flourished for more than three hundred years, that they constituted the prevailing doctrine for two centuries in Spain, that they sat for a long time upon the throne east and west, and that they held sway among the Goths, the Vandals,

Holy Ghost. The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

It should also be borne in mind that the creed of the Semi-Arian council, in which Arius was reinstated after his deposition by the emperor, is, on the whole, highly satisfactory to the most orthodox modern believer. It reads thus: "We believe, conformably to the evangelical and apostolic tradition, in one God, the Father Almighty, the Framer and Maker and Preserver of the Universe, from whom are all things. And in our Lord Jesus Christ, his Only-begotten Son, God, by whom are all things: who was begotten before all ages from the Father, God from God, whole for whole, sole for sole, but unalterable and unchangeable, unvarying image of the Godhead, substance, will, power, and glory of the Father."

This creed anathematized those who say that "the Son is from other substance, and not from God," that "there was a time when he was not," or "that Christ is not God."

Burgundians, and the Alani, and did not disappear until about the close of the eighth century.*

We have already suggested the substance of the second class of views, the Semi-Arian. They may be more definitely stated thus: "The Son of God differs from all other creatures, not merely in degree, but also in essence: though eternal generation may be predicated, still the generation of the Son out of the essence of the Father is denied, because it leads to the scholastic theory of emanation; and it was thought that the union of Father and Son in one nature, the principle upon which emanation was based, would annihilate all personal distinctions in the Trinity." The party entertaining these views was very large and influential.

The third class of views finds embodiment in Athanasianism, and maintained the opinion that Christ is a being logically inferior to God, and begotten eternally. The subordination — for subordination was clearly taught — differs from that of Arius in the substitution of the term *generation* in place of *creation*.

It is highly probable that all parties would have subscribed to the creed presented by Athanasius and

* In view of all these facts, orthodoxy need not stop to dispute it, or at least need not be greatly alarmed, when opponents claim that Erasmus, Grotius, Milton, Newton, Locke, Clarke, Lardner, and Priestley, Mrs. Ware, and Florence Nightingale were Arians. If modern opponents of evangelical views will indorse the substance of either the creed of Eusebius or the Semi-Arian creed subsequently issued, they must logically reach and rest upon orthodox grounds.

his friends, had it not been for the single term translated *same substance.**

To this the Arian party could not give assent, not because they thought it stated too emphatically the essential deity of Christ, but because it had been previously objected to by Eusebius of Nicomedia, a prominent Arian, because it had been previously condemned by the church, and because it appeared to the opponents of Athanasius to be, to employ their own

* The following was the creed presented by this party to the council: "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, both visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father (only begotten, that is to say, of the substance of the Father, God of God), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made (both things in heaven and things in earth) — who, for us men and for our salvation, came down and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, went up into the heavens, and is to come again to judge the quick and dead. And in the Holy Ghost. (But those who say there was when he was not, and before he was begotten he was not, or who profess that the Son of God is a different person, or substance, or that he is created, or changeable, or variable, are anathematized by the Catholic church.)"

The portions of the creed included in parentheses were subsequently omitted.

The so-called Athanasian creed, which was a later, and probably a Spanish production, is the following: "We worship one God in Trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal."

words — "unscriptural," "heretical," "materialistic," "Sabellian," and "Montanistic." Nor should we much wonder at this opposition, when we consider through what strange vicissitudes this controversial word had passed. "It was born and nurtured, if not in the home, at least on the threshold, of heresy. It first distinctly appeared in the statement given by Irenæus of the doctrines of Valentinus; then for a moment acquired a more orthodox reputation in the writings of Dionysius and Theognostus of Alexandria; then it was colored with a dark shade by association with the teaching of Manes; next proposed as a test of orthodoxy at the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata; and then by that same council was condemned as Sabellian."

The more we review this subject, the more a pity does it seem that men who at heart differed so little should, in consequence of their terminology and metaphysics, wage such fierce and protracted conflicts. It was not with these early disputants a question of what Christ was, but *how* he became such; not a question of nature so much as of manner.

We venture the assertion that in any other age, excepting one of acknowledged doctrinal development, differences so slight and unimportant as those between Arius and Athanasius would not have been allowed to involve in controversy so bitter men of such superior intelligence, and, in other respects, of such generous views. Controversy too often arises in consequence of knowing about one half what one ought.

In saying this we are aware to what a minimum we are reducing the doctrinal differences in that contro-

versy; we are also aware of the charge that will be sure to follow, that we have surrendered the entire field of patristic theology into the hands of Unitarianism. Our only reply is, If Unitarians will accept the surrender and take the consequences, they are more than welcome.

We lose nothing by being fair and above-board, and fair dealing, we are free to confess, upon the ground usually occupied by church historians, does not make out a very strong case in favor of modern Trinitarianism, especially when that case is made to depend upon opinions *pro* and *con* as related to the use of a single word.

In fine, it is unphilosophical to expect a solution of these metaphysical difficulties in the forenoon of ecclesiastical controversy. Five hundred years of thought and talk are none too many in which, by the gradual unfolding of the Christian sentiment, to frame into satisfactory scientific statement the grand and eternally true, though forever mysterious, doctrine of the Trinity and other doctrines connected therewith.

But in making these concessions and admissions, let it not be presumed that it is on our part an act of unqualified disinterestedness. We have pursued this course because we believe it correct, and also for the purpose of asking a return of more, really, than we have given away; and candor, we are quite sure, will comply, even if the demand seems immodest.

Before the claim is formally presented, however, we revert for a moment to certain phases of the historic scene through which we have passed. From this commanding point of view now reached, we are

enabled clearly to see that Sabellianism, in order to escape from the Jewish tendency, went much too far towards the admission of a twofold nature in the Godhead; that Arianism, in order to retain the divine unity, went quite too far towards the denial of all divinity in the Logos; and that the Nicene fathers, in their violent opposition to Arianism, overlooked the real issue, made the whole subject one of technical terms, and occupied a position that must be abandoned.

Or, expressing the case differently, Arianism, at the council, was in poise; should it swing one way, it would become monotheistic; if the other way, it would become existing orthodoxy. Athanasianism was in poise also; swinging one way, it would become Sabellianism; the other way, orthodoxy.

Athanasius was in danger of losing sight of the divine unity, which would have given to the world polytheism. Arius was in danger of overlooking the divinity of Christ, which would have deprived the world of a Saviour, and have returned God to the dim and inaccessible heavens.

Though each was in position of danger, neither really went so far as to reach the extreme point; still both were about equally wrong in the leading steps taken. Arius was no farther from the truth in saying that Christ was subordinate, because *created*, than was Athanasius in his unintended, though logical, denial of the supreme deity of Christ in consequence of representing him as *begotten*.

Arius, it is worth observing, upon certain admitted premises seemed strongly intrenched. Taking the first position, that of Origen and the fathers after

him, which was, that Christ was a secondary, that is, derived essence, — "light of light," *begotten*, — and the second position, that of the Nicene fathers, viz., there are but two essences in the universe, created and uncreated, the third position, that of Arius, logically followed; that is, Christ, though he stands in the grand forefront of all creation, was *created*.

The sharp and indirect questions put by Eunomius to those who advocated eternal generation, in distinction from creation, were never well answered. "God," said this reasoner, "begat the Son, the Son meantime being, or not being; if not being, then he was not eternal; if being, then no need of a generation." Again, "If there never was when the Son was not, and if he is eternal and co-existent with the Father, why call him Son? why not call him brother?"

We repeat, then, both parties were in error. "The scholastic divines have said, *without any meaning*, that Christ is eternally generated. But the Scriptures have made no such impression upon the majority of believers." *

Eternal generation is felt, by many, to be little other than "eternal nonsense." †

These scholastic divines, it must be confessed, did signally fail to meet the demands of the religious consciousness of Christendom. They failed also to conform to the teachings of the New Testament, because

* Park.

† It is now conceded by the ablest divines that the term "Son" may be applied to the second person in the Trinity only retrospectively or prophetically — an illustration of the text, "slain from the foundation of the world."

they have not in reality, whatever their intention, presented each person of the Trinity as fully equal to the other. "And in whatever shape we present the idea of derivation, whether we call it by the name of generation, procession, emanation, or by any other like appellation, still the idea remains of dependence. A derived God cannot be a self-existent God, and a dependent God cannot be an independent God." *

Is it retorted that we are making heretics of the orthodox party, and forming an orthodox party out of heretics? Nay; but we do plainly say, "that nothing respecting the indispensable attributes of self-existence and independence is gained by going over from the camp of the Arians to that of the Niceans."

"As soberly contemplated by us of the present day," some one, perhaps Steuart, or Schleiermacher, has remarked, "it is really a matter of comparatively small importance whether Nicene or Arian views now obtain ascendency."

But we also claim that many of these heretics, in their formal statements, appear to stand within the boundaries of the Westminster Confessions of faith.

That they were for the most part devout men, and entertaining views less colored with Gnostic and Asiatic philosophy, that they clung, in some instances, more closely to Christian conviction than did many of their opponents, must be admitted. We need say nothing more in their favor; we could not well say less.

But it is at this point we ask an equivalent in return for the concession made.

It is this. Notwithstanding the errors of the scholas-

* Steuart.

tic fathers, they did, on the other hand, in many expressions, logically admit one divine essence in the Trinity; they applied the divine attributes to Christ, and they worshipped him. This need not surprise us, for their Christian consciousness was nearer right than their dogmatic formula. "The language of theology," as Froude rightly says, "hovering, as it generally does, between extravagance and conventionality, must not be scanned too narrowly."

But more than this; the fathers did not mean to be Arians; they meant to denounce Arianism; and they did not mean to be Tritheists. Their writings abound in sentiments opposed to that doctrine. They meant to believe in the real divinity of the Lord Christ.*

* The same is to be said of early Christian belief in the Holy Ghost as of the deity of Christ; it was not formally stated. "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit," says Baumgarten, "remained a long time undecided. It lay near to the first church in a practical respect only."

Says Neander, "Some believed him to be a mere power; some confounded the idea of person with the charism; others supposed him to be a creature; others believed him to be God; and others still were undecided. The practical recognition of him, however, as the principle of the divine life in man, was almost universal in the early church."

That is, the essential idea involved in the doctrine of the Trinity, and happily expressed in the Westminster Confession, is the doctrine that has held the body of Christians together since the day of Pentecost. An effort to formulate the idea is what has divided them.

This doctrine is the distinguishing mark of Christian truth, defining it against polytheism on the one hand, which gives us a God distracted by multiplicity, and against the cold Hebrew and Arabian monotheism on the other, which gives us

We go still farther. The great body of the church, including Sabellians, Arians, and Athanasians, especially including the mass of intelligent Christians, whether learned or otherwise, also including the great body of intelligent theologians who, subsequently to the Council of Nice, advocated its symbol, really intended to recognize the divinity, special and distinct, of the Lord Jesus. They were often heathen in the head, but Christians at heart. Had they lived in our day, the majority, we doubt not, would have subscribed without hesitation or reservation to the orthodox articles of faith, as do the great mass of those who are now born into the kingdom of Christ.

Such, then, were the early church opinions respecting the one whose manifestation we are considering.

From all quarters, from the humble Christian whose voice was never heard in controversy, and who, when questioned sharply as to Christ's nature, could best reply, "I cannot tell, but I can die for him," and from the ablest controversialists the world has ever known, from orthodox and from heretic, early history through, the report, if we mistake not, is everywhere essentially the same; and the united assertion is heard high and clear above all controversy — Jesus of Nazareth was superhuman, supernatural, and divine.

an insulated self; raising it equally above Persian dualism and Hindoo tritheism and the unconscious All of pantheism.

It gives us a being whose essence is unity, — a unit, — and yet something else which is more than a process, and more than an association of names.

VI.

MODERN OPINIONS AND ESTIMATES.

IN seeking conclusions respecting the life and character of Jesus, it is apparent to all that modern admissions and opinions cannot be ignored; nay, that they must enter quite largely into anything like correct estimates is self-evident. The vast array of public opinion which through ancient and medieval times indorses the conclusion that Jesus was a manifestation fulfilling conditions never before realized, though always longed for, is legitimate and weighty, but must give place to other testimony less direct and friendly, but more important in the judgment of doubters.

The convictions of acknowledged evangelical thinkers and scholars, a mere statement of which would fill not merely a book, but a library, merit likewise a prominent place in the general argument. But we waive these also for the present, and consider the admissions of those chiefly who are reckoned among the opponents of modern evangelical faith, including, at the same time, a class of eminent men who are not in sympathy with Rationalism, and yet who are not in their belief

regarded as orthodox. A few German names first claim attention.*

Lessing, who introduced, it must be confessed, much confusion into the theological world, and whom all free-thinkers regard as one of their number, especially in his opposition to evangelical Christianity, says, —

"A better teacher must come, and snatch the worn-out Hornbook (elementary book) from the hands of the child. Christ came.

"And so Christ became the first *reliable*, *practical* Teacher of the Immortality of the Soul.

"The first *reliable* Teacher. Reliable because of the prophecies which seemed fulfilled in him; reliable because of the miracles which he wrought; reliable because of his own reviving after a death by which he had sealed his doctrine. Whether we now can prove this restoration to life, these miracles — that I leave undecided, as I leave undecided who the person of this Christ was. All this may have been significant then for the *reception* of his doctrine; but now it is no more so significant for the recognition of the truth of this doctrine.

"The first *practical* Teacher. For it is one thing to suppose, to wish, to believe, the Immortality of the Soul, as a philosophical speculation; it is another to direct one's inner and outer actions thereby (according

* We are confined, of course, in this field of investigation, to the German, French, and English speaking people. Germany is given the first place because it is, as to sceptical criticism, first in importance, though England and France are both in advance as to historic order.

to it). And this, at least, Christ taught for the first time." *

Scarcely less unevangelical is Immanuel Kant thought to be. But when some one instituted a comparison between his morals and those of Jesus, he expressed a religious horror at the sight of his name in such connection, and begged his friend to erase the offensive parallel, assigning the following reason: —

"One of those names, before which the heavens bow, is sacred, while the other is only that of a poor scholar endeavoring to explain to the best of his abilities the teachings of his Master."

Schelling, who is always classed among pantheists and unbelievers, admits without qualification that the

* Lessing's view of the Trinity as involving the eternally begotten Son may not, in this connection, be out of place.

"As to the doctrine of the Trinity. How, if this doctrine should, after numberless deviations, right and left, bring the human understanding finally on the way to perceive that God, in the understanding, wherein finite things are *One*, can by no possibility be *One* — that also his Unity must be a transcendental Unity, which does not exclude a kind of Plurality? . . . Consequently God can have either no complete conception (representation, *Vorstellung*) of himself, or this complete conception is as much actual by necessity, as he himself is. . . . If, now, my image (in the mirror) had *all*, all without exception, which I have, would it then also be a mere empty representation, or not rather a true doubling (*Verdopplung*) of myself? If I believe that I perceive a similar doubling in God, perhaps I do not err so much, but rather speech is inadequate to my notions . . . certainly the idea could hardly be expressed more comprehensibly and more suitably, than by the appellation (*Benennung*) of a Son, whom God begets from eternity."

advent of Jesus was "the turning-point of the world's history." "Jesus Christ," he says, "was a living word," an "eternal discourse."

Fichte, the "sceptic and atheist," pays Jesus the highest compliment one man of genius can pay another, making him the original propounder of his own system of philosophy. He also says that Jesus "did more than all other philosophers in bringing heavenly morality into the hearts and homes of common men." "Till the end of time, all the sensible will bow low before this Jesus of Nazareth, and all will humbly acknowledge the exceeding glory of this great phenomenon." "His followers are nations and generations."

One is hardly disposed to classify F. H. Jacobi among sceptics; but clearly enough he was only in part Christian. He entertained to the last of life grave suspicions in reference to positive Christianity. Nevertheless he bowed with reverence before the life and character of the Lord Jesus.

While commending the representation which Claudius had made of Jesus, he says, —

"What a picture! What sublime and touching contrasts! And what force of beauty, of mildness, and of majesty in the combined features of this perfect ideal of united divinity and humanity!"

Richter, though recognized as a satirist of orthodox Christianity, calls Jesus "the purest of the mighty, the mightiest of the pure, who with his pierced hands raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channels, and still continues to rule and guide the ages."

Goethe, the "Liberal," designated also the "German Voltaire," a writer whom all modern opposers heed as a most worthy oracle, applies to Jesus the bold titles, "Divine Man," and "The Holy One." Alluding to the sufferings of Jesus, he says, "We draw a veil over them, because we reverence them so highly."

United with Richter and Goethe in the realm of polite literature is Novalis,* externally a Protestant, inclining towards Catholicism, but often advocating an "indefinite pantheism." He is said by his biographer to be "a stranger to all affectation and hypocrisy."

With many other distinguished Germans, he always addressed Jesus as his "Lord." Speaking of his death, he says, "Christ was the greatest martyr of our species; through him has martyrdom become infinitely significant and holy."

De Wette, in this same category of destructive minds, though at many points bitterly opposed to extreme Rationalism, at least respecting its view of Christ, says, "Jesus is the blameless and the sinless one."

Hegel is quoted in support of all sorts of errors, and regarded by not a few as one of the most subtle antagonists of the Christian faith. Yet his biographer says, in reply to those who claimed that Hegel's system was far removed from Christianity, "To us who have learned to know Hegel's relation to theology from the beginning, there is nothing surprising in the fact that he was convinced that in his speculation he was not only not in contradiction to the essence of the Christian faith, but rather in unison with it."

* Friedrich Ludwig Von Hardenburg.

He claimed that his system furnished a scientific basis for what are called "evangelical doctrines."

He looked upon Christ — employing his own words — "as that person in whose self-consciousness the unity of the Divine and Human first came forth, and with an energy, that, in the whole course of his life and character, diminished to the very lowest possible degree all limitations of this unity. In this respect he stands alone and unequalled in the world's history."

Strauss, "the coryphæus of modern scepticism," may be allowed to close the list of German rationalistic thinkers.* Notwithstanding his extreme opposition, he is free to confess that Jesus, "among the improvers of ideal humanity, stands in the very first class, . . . and remains, the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought; and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart."

The large class of Germans, who, amid professional and other duties, have taken no positive attitude respecting the deity of Jesus, and who have occupied such positions as to be claimed by both sides of the controversy, find an able and satisfactory representative in Chevalier Bunsen. We allow his biographer and reviewer to state his position.

"It is more than gratifying," he says, "to reflect that,

* Mr. Parker's estimate of the great work of Strauss, the Life of Jesus, though disagreeing with it, is undoubtedly, not far from correct. "It is the most remarkable work that has appeared in theology for the last one hundred and fifty years," and of such a character as to "make an epoch in theological affairs." To the orthodox mind the work is exceedingly erroneous and all its tendencies destructive.

if Bunsen pained the hearts of certain of Christ's children on earth by what seemed an insufficient faith in the evidence of his resurrection, his thought on his death-bed was of Christ only, and his mind overflowed with enraptured love for his Lord and Master. 'Upward — upward!' he exclaimed; 'it becomes not darker, but always brighter. God is Life, Love; Love that wills — Will that loves. *Christus recognoscitur Victor, Christus est Victor.*'" *

We will not pause at this point to press the position, but simply ask, in a word, What estimates shall be placed upon the admissions of these profound thinkers? Were they carried away with mere sentiment? Rather were they not under deep conviction that Jesus, whatever he was, fulfilled conditions never before attained by humanity.

From German we pass to French writers, allowing the same general methods to govern our classifications and quotations.

* Spinoza, the father of modern pantheism, the man of practical piety and profound thought, though not a German, having been born in Amsterdam and of Jewish parentage, has, nevertheless, exercised such influence upon German thought, that he is almost naturalized. Novalis, Schleiermacher, Lessing, and Goethe, have acknowledged his intellectual supremacy. Novalis calls him the "God-intoxicated man;" and Schleiermacher calls upon all thinkers to unite with him in offering "a lock of hair to the manes of the holy but persecuted Spinoza." His confession respecting Jesus may find its place in this list, and is the following: —

"To know the ideal Christ, namely, the eternal wisdom of God, which is manifested in all things, . . . especially in Jesus Christ, — this alone is necessary."

Rousseau, who was in some respects in sympathy with Christianity, and in other respects antagonistic to it, who was deist and also idealist, asks, "if it can be possible that the sacred personage whose history the Scriptures contain should be himself a mere man." "When Plato describes his imaginary righteous man," he continues "loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ."

The comparison Rousseau institutes between Christ and Socrates is almost too well known to justify repetition, yet we venture its quotation.

"What a difference between the son of Sophroniscus and the son of Mary! Socrates dies with honor, surrounded by his disciples, listening to the most tender words — the easiest death that one could wish to die. Jesus dies in pain, dishonored, mocked, the object of universal cursing — the most horrible death which one could fear. At the receipt of the cup of poison, Socrates blesses him who could not give it to him without tears; Jesus, while suffering the sharpest pains, prays for his most bitter enemies. If Socrates lived and died like a philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a God."

F. Pecant, another French writer, who boldly and frequently assails orthodoxy, admits, to employ his own language, that "Christ's moral character rose beyond comparison above that of any other great man of antiquity. . . . Jesus lives in the house of his heavenly Father, and never loses sight of the invisible world. . . . He was the master of all because he is really their brother. His moral life is wholly penetrated by God."

Joufiroy, one of the profoundest thinkers of the

French eclectic school, unhesitatingly admits that the advent of Christ is the "only thing active and diffusive" in society. He agrees with Vinet that it was, and is, "the gravitation of the moral world."

Ernest Renan stands out so boldly in his opposition to revealed religion and a supernatural Christ, and yet has investigated the subject so extensively, and has said so much which seems in direct antagonism to his main position and philosophy, that we shall be pardoned for quoting here and there, and more at length than from many others who are less noted. Renan, in his most famous work, The Life of Jesus, says, —

"Jesus has no visions; God does not speak to him from without. God is in him; he feels that he is with God, and he draws from his heart what he says of his Father. He lives in the bosom of God by uninterrupted communication: he does not see him, but he understands him without need of thunder and burning bush like Moses, of a revealing tempest like Job, of an oracle like the old Greek sages, of a familiar genius like Socrates, or of an angel Gabriel like Mohammed. The imagination and hallucination of a St. Theresa, for example, here go for nothing. The intoxication of the Soufi, proclaiming himself identical with God, is also an entirely different thing. . . . Between Thee and God? there will be no longer any distinction. Complete conqueror of death, take possession of thy kingdom; whither shall follow thee, by the royal road which thou hast traced, ages of worshippers (*des siècles d'adorateurs*). . . . Far from having been created by his disciples, Jesus appears in all things superior to his disciples. They, St. Paul and St. John excepted, were

men without talent or genius. . . . Upon the whole, the character of Jesus, far from having been embellished by his biographers, has been belittled by them."

"Jesus is unique in everything, and nothing can compare with him." . . . "He is a man of colossal dimensions, 'the Incomparable Man,' . . . the Adorable One, who shall preside over the destinies, — to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of *Son of God*."

"After him there is nothing more to develop and fructify."

"He was the creator of the eternal religion of humanity. . . . Between Thee and God there will no longer be any distinction."

Renan concludes his Life of Jesus thus: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that, among the sons of men, there is none born greater than Jesus."

In his later work, Lives of the Apostles, Renan sees no reason for changing his former estimates: "Paul is not Jesus. How far removed are we from thee, dear Master! Where is thy mildness, thy poetry? Thou, to whom a flower did bring pleasure and ecstasy, dost thou recognize as thy disciples these wranglers, these men furious over their prerogatives, and desiring that everything should be held of them? They are men: thou wast a God."

To these outspoken and extreme opposers of the Christian faith may be added a class of strong-minded

men in France, who have made no professions of experimental Christianity, and no pretensions to exact theological knowledge, and yet who think, and have arrived at correct and often profound conclusions.

We take, for illustration, certain admissions made by Napoleon at St. Helena, as indicating the position of this class. The point made will not be essentially qualified if forced to confess that the words, as reported, have received some slight embellishment, for they are unquestionably the substance of his confession. Speaking of Jesus, he says, —

"Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. His ideas and his sentiments, the truths which he announces, his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human observation or the nature of things.

"His birth, and the history of his life; the profundity of his doctrine, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is of those difficulties the most admirable solution; his gospel, his apparition, his empire; his march across the ages and the realms, — everything is for me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into a reverie from which I cannot escape; a mystery which is there before my eyes; a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain.

"Here I see nothing human. The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above me, everything remains grand, — of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an Intelligence which certainly is not that of man. . . .

"Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of

other religions. That resemblance does not exist. . . . I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man."

Again we merely pause to inquire, What mean this talk and these admissions? Are they whimseys, or, rather, are they not glimpses of the grandest thought which has ever dawned upon human intelligence?

Passing from France to England, and down to recent dates, we discover that infidel and sceptical minds here as elsewhere, are free to acknowledge, whenever alluding to the subject, that the Being who came on earth two thousand years ago was a manifestation unparalleled in human history.

James Martineau, who has said many hard things respecting the evangelical views of Jesus, admits, in his better moments, that it is "the agency of Christ's mind as the expression of God's moral nature and providence, and as the realized ideal of beauty and excellence, . . . which is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

"Christ is the commissioned prophet," he continues, "the merciful redeemer, the inspired teacher, the perfect model, the heavenly guide."

Mackay, another prophet of the radical and liberal school, confesses that "among many pretenders to Messiahship, Jesus alone seems to have understood the character in which the office had any chance of being advantageously administered."

Mr. W. R. Gregg, another zealous opposer of evangelical views, makes the following clear and forcible admission: "It is difficult, without exhausting superlatives, even to unexpressive and wearisome satiety,

to do justice to our intense love, reverence, and admiration for the character and teachings of Jesus. We regard him, not as the perfection of the intellectual or philosophic mind, but as the perfection of the spiritual character; as surpassing all men at all times in the closeness and depth of his communion with the Father. In reading his sayings, we feel that we are holding converse with the wisest, purest, noblest Being that ever clothed thought in the poor language of humanity. In studying his life, we feel that we are following the footsteps of the highest ideal yet presented to us upon earth."

Professor Jowett must be acknowledged an able representative of the late school of English reviewists, and he doubtless gives correct expression to their opinions when confessing that "in the words of Christ is contained the inner life of mankind, and of the church: there, too, the individual beholds, as in a glass, the image of a goodness which is not of this world."

We may also allow Miss Cobbe to represent the English admirers and disciples of Theodore Parker. She says, "Those who have regarded him [Jesus] from the rationalistic side, have commonly fixed their attention on his moral teachings, and have proclaimed him the supreme moral reformer of the world. He *was* so, indeed, but he was surely something more. . . .

"The view, therefore, which seems to be the sole fitting one for our estimation of the character of Christ, is that which regards him as the great Regenerator of humanity. His coming was to the life of humanity what regeneration is to the life of the individual.

This is a broad, plain inference from the universal history of our race. The world *has* changed, and that change is historically traceable to Christ."

In addition to these opponents of the Christian faith, there have been in England, as in other countries, a class of men whom it is difficult to locate. While orthodoxy, for its credit, should not attempt to claim them, it should, at the same time, resolutely deny the right of her opponents to class them among theoretical unbelievers. We must be content to receive the testimony of a few only, and these as representative merely.

In this doubtful relation appears first in importance the shadowy spirit of Thomas Carlyle, who is called almost everything, and classed almost everywhere.

He has, however, spoken grand words for Jesus, making him "the greatest of heroes," which, with Carlyle, means much. "His life," he confesses, "is a perfect ideal poem." The "tidings of the most important event ever transacted in this world is the Life and Death of the Divine Man in Judea, at once the symptom and cause of immeasurable changes to all people in the world.

"He walked in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, his sphere melody flowing in wild native tones; took captive the ravished souls of men, and, being of a truth sphere melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousand-fold accompaniments and rich symphonies through all our hearts, and modulates and divinely leads them."

We may add the confession of Lord Byron that "if ever man was God, or God man, Jesus Christ was

both;" and that of Froude: "The most perfect being who ever trod the soil of this planet was called the Man of Sorrows;"* and the words which occur in the Will of Charles Dickens — words which bind him forever to Christian hearts: "I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teachings of the New Testament." †

* This suggests the language of Thomas Decker: "The best of men that ever wore earth about him was a sufferer, a meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit, — the first true gentleman that ever breathed."

† Scarcely less touching and impressive are his words relating to Christmas, and embodying, in brief, the life of the Saviour: "Hark! the waits are playing, and they break my childish sleep. What images do I associate with the Christmas music, as I see them set forth on the Christmas tree? Known before all others, keeping far apart from all the others, they gather round my little bed. An angel, speaking to a group of shepherds in a field; some travellers, with eyes uplifted, following a star; a baby in a manger; a child in a spacious temple, talking with grave men; a solemn figure, with a mild and beautiful face, raising a dead girl by the hand; again, near a city gate, calling back the son of a widow, on his bier, to life; a crowd of people, looking through the opened roof of a chamber, where he sits, and letting down a sick person, on a bed, with ropes; the same, in a tempest, walking on the water to a ship; again, on a sea-shore, teaching a great multitude; again, with a child upon his knee, and other children around; again, restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, strength to the lame, knowledge to the ignorant; again, dying upon a cross, watched by armed soldiers, a thick darkness coming on, the earth beginning to shake, and only one voice heard, — 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do!'"

Without pausing to re-state the question, already twice repeated, as to the force of this language, but leaving it to be inferred and answered at pleasure, we pass at once from English to American scepticism, which is as bold as that of any other nationality, but possessing far less originality. In fact, its originality is reduced to the minimum.

If the term *early* can yet be applied to anything distinctively American, we would ask attention, first, to the voice of early American deism, represented in its different phases by such men as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson.*

Their deism, like the deistic infidelity of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, and Voltaire, in France, and the deistic rationalism of Germany commencing in the court of Frederick the Great, is traceable, directly and indirectly, to English literature, as influenced by the writings of Lord Herbert and Thomas Hobbes.

Thomas Paine, though born in England, and schooled a part of his life in France, was present, and exerted not a little influence during the struggles of this country for independence; he may therefore be classed among the representatives of early American unbelief.

He was an avowed infidel and scoffer, often indulging in such extreme coarseness and bitterness as indicate almost entire destitution of refinement and culture; yet, in his better moments, he was so impressed with the life and character of Jesus, as to disclaim

* If some one who is qualified could be induced to write the ecclesiastical history of America, he would certainly confer a great favor upon the reading public. Few countries, or epochs, are crowded with such intensely interesting material.

even "the most distant disrespect for his real character."

Speaking of the pre-eminence of Christ's teachings, he says, "The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before, by the Quakers since, and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any." *

Of the theological opinions of Franklin we know much less than of Paine's, yet of his we are not entirely ignorant. In a letter to President Stiles, of Yale College, dated March 9, 1790, he thus — it must be confessed, somewhat cautiously — speaks of Jesus of Nazareth: "I think his system of morals and religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is like to see. Still, I have, with most of the

* While attempting no palliation for the course pursued by Paine, we ought, perhaps, in justice to say of him, as of many others, that his objections arose in no respect from the life and character of Jesus, or from a pure Christianity, but from Romanism and a corrupt priesthood. The frontispiece in the Boston edition of his theological works is suggestive: a church in the background; flocks and grain-fields on either side of the road leading to it; a sleek and fat parson, with a sheaf under one arm, and a lamb under the other, wending his way homeward; and a lank peasant, sickle in hand, to whom, doubtless, belonged the sheaf and lamb, calling after the parson, and pointing to pillars of immovable rocks, upon which is the inscription, *The Age of Reason.* They are such conceptions and misrepresentations as these, occasioned in part by a lifeless church and selfish priesthood, which, while they offer no apology for infidelity, must be taken into account in explaining its existence and intensity.

present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity, though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it. I shall know about it soon."

Mr. Jefferson's admissions are characterized by the same cautious reserve. He lays special stress upon the moral system of Jesus. "Such are the fragments remaining," he says, "as to show a master workman, and that his system of morality was the most benevolent and sublime, probably, that has been ever taught, and more perfect than those of any of the ancient philosophers." *

* The letter in which this passage occurs is dated Washington, April 9, 1803, and was addressed to Dr. Priestley, in review of his Comparative View of Socrates and Jesus. It is, doubtless, a very correct expression of the views at that time entertained by the more refined class of American deists. The following is the letter in full: —

"While on a short visit lately to Monticello, I received from you a copy of your Comparative View of Socrates and Jesus, and I avail myself of the first moment of leisure, after my return, to acknowledge the pleasure I had in the perusal, and the desire it excited to see you take up the subject on a more extensive scale. In consequence of some conversations with Dr. Rush, in the years 1798-99, I had promised some day to write him a letter, giving him my view of the Christian system. I have reflected often on it since, and even sketched the outlines in my own mind. I should first take a general view of the moral doctrines of the most remarkable of the ancient philosophers, of whose ethics we have sufficient information to make an estimate, — say of Pythagoras, Epictetus, Socrates, Seneca, Antoninus. I should do justice to the branches of morality they have treated well, but point out the importance of those in which they are deficient. I should then take a view of the deism

These deists, some of whom, perhaps, at the present time, would better be termed theists,* are certainly

and ethics of the Jews, and show in what a degraded state they were, and the necessity they presented of a reformation. I should proceed to a view of the life, character, and doctrines of Jesus, who, sensible of the incorrectness of their ideas of the deity, and of morality, endeavored to bring them to the principles of a pure deism, and juster notions of the attributes of God; to reform their moral doctrines to the standard of reason, justice, and philanthropy, and to inculcate the belief of a future state.

"This view would purposely omit the question of his divinity, and even of his inspiration. To do him justice, it would be necessary to remark the disadvantage his doctrines have to encounter, not having been committed to writing by himself, but by the most unlettered of men, by memory, long after they had heard them from him, when much was forgotten, much misunderstood, and presented in very paradoxical shapes. Yet such are the fragments remaining as to show a master workman, and that his system of morality was the most benevolent and sublime, probably, that has ever been taught, and more perfect than those of any of the ancient philosophers. His character and doctrines have received still greater injury from those who pretend to be his spiritual disciples, and who have disfigured and sophisticated his actions and precepts from views of personal interest, so as to induce the unthinking part of mankind to throw off the whole system in disgust, and to pass sentence as an impostor on the most innocent, the most benevolent, the most eloquent and sublime character that has ever been exhibited to man. This is the outline: but I have not the time, and still less the information, which the subject needs. It will therefore rest with me in contemplation only."

* The distinction between the terms *deist* and *theist* has not always been kept clear. Viret was one of the first to employ the word *deist*. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Herbert appropriated it; afterwards, Blount also, to

not believers. They were unbelievers; and yet, like Goethe and Carlyle, they were often amazed at many of the religious problems surrounding them, and would be still more so, did they live in present times.

They were often shocked, and justly so, by the conduct and character of some of Christ's nominal representatives; and yet they were often found standing in silent contemplation before his character, regarding it as a fitter object for profoundest meditation than for ordinary conversation.* They were seekers after truth, and waiters; waiting, perhaps, too long.

Passing over the intervening period, we come down to the rise and development of American Unitarianism.

We must confess, at the outset, that we have been deeply impressed with the character of the testimonies for a divine Christ, which everywhere appear in the writings of the father and founder of Unitarianism in this country, William Ellery Channing.†

distinguish themselves from atheists; but Herbert also calls himself theist. The distinction that has been attempted by most writers is, that theism opposes religious error in general, and deism implies a position antagonistic to revealed religion.

* The reply of Mr. Emerson to the question, Why did you not treat the character of Jesus, instead of Swedenborg, to illustrate the religious idea in your Representative Men? is in this connection suggestive: "That character of Jesus requires a strong constitution to handle."

† Dr. Channing, after the year 1815, may be regarded as nominally a Unitarian, and as standing at the head of the denomination in this country. Yet he never dogmatically asserted the mere humanity of Jesus Christ.

As late as 1841, he said, "I am little of a Unitarian, have little sympathy with the system of Priestley and Belsham,

The most rigid orthodox believers, while listening to some of his expressions respecting sublime Christian truths, — and perhaps we ought not to hesitate to add also, respecting Christian faith, — will almost feel, not the hand of an opponent raised against them, but of a brother, clasped within their own. The following are a few among many such expressions: —

"I ask you whether the character of Jesus be not the most extraordinary in history, and wholly inexplicable on human principles. He talks of his glories as one to whom they were familiar, and of his intimacy and oneness with God, as simply as a child speaks of his connection with his parents. I maintain that this is a character wholly remote from human conception. I contemplate it with a veneration second only to the profound awe with which I look up to God. It was a real character. It belongs to and it manifests the beloved Son of God." "Jesus is not a fiction. He is still the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

"I confess, when I can escape the deadening power of habit, and can receive the full import of such passages as the following: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' 'I am come to seek and to save that which is lost;' 'He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven;' 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me before men, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels;' 'In my Father's

and stand aloof from all but those who strive and pray for clearer light."

house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you;' — I say, when I can succeed in realizing the import of such passages, I feel myself listening to a being such as never before and never since spoke in human language; I am awed by the consciousness of greatness which these simple words express; and, when I connect this greatness with the proofs of Christ's miracles, I am compelled to exclaim, with the centurion, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'

"Here I pause; and indeed I know not what can be added to heighten the wonder, reverence, and love which are due to Jesus. When I consider him, not only as possessed with the consciousness of an unexampled and unbounded majesty, but as recognizing a kindred nature in human beings, and living and dying to raise them to a participation of his divine glories, — and when I see him, under these views, allying himself to men by the tenderest ties, embracing them with a spirit of humanity which no insult, injury, or pain could for a moment repel or overpower, — I am filled with wonder, as well as reverence and love. I feel that this character is not of human invention; that it was not assumed through fraud, or struck out by enthusiasm; for it is infinitely above their reach.

"When I add this character of Jesus to the other evidences of his religion, it gives to what before seemed so strong a new and a vast accession of strength. I feel as if I could not be deceived. The Gospels must be true. They were drawn from a living original; they were founded on reality. The character of Jesus is not a fiction; he was what he claimed to be, and what his followers attested.

"Nor is this all. Jesus not only *was*, he is *still*, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He exists now; he has entered that heaven to which he always looked forward on earth. There he lives and reigns. With a clear, calm faith, I see him in that state of glory; and I confidently expect, at no distant period, to see him face to face."

Mr. Parker stands in such historic connection with Dr. Channing, that he is entitled, perhaps, to the next place on the list, though other considerations would quickly classify him elsewhere. Still some of his words are lofty and inspiring. Discoursing upon Jesus, he says, "He pours out a doctrine as beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the prophets, the Rabbis, — he rises above them all. Yet Nazareth was no Athens, where philosophy breathed in the circumambient air; it had neither porch nor lyceum; not even a school of the prophets. There is God in the heart of this youth."

"That mightiest heart that ever beat, stirred by the Spirit of God, how it wrought in his bosom! What words of rebuke, of comfort, counsel, admonition, promise, hope, did he pour out! words that stir the soul as summer dews call up the faint and sickly grass. What profound instruction in his proverbs and discourses! what wisdom in his homely sayings, so rich with Jewish life! what deep divinity of soul in his prayers, his action, sympathy, resignation!

"Try him as we try other teachers. They deliver their word; find a few waiting for the consolation, who accept the new tidings, follow the new method,

and soon go beyond their teacher, though less mighty minds than he. Such is the case with each founder of a school of philosophy, each sect in religion. Though humble men, we see what Socrates and Luther never saw. But eighteen centuries have passed since the tide of humanity rose so high in Jesus; what man, what sect, what church, has mastered his thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to life? Let the world answer in its cry of anguish. . . .

"To our apprehension, Jesus was much greater than the evangelists represent him. We would not measure him by the conceptions formed by Jewish or heathen converts, but by the long stream of light he shed on the first three centuries after his death, and through them on all time since.

"Measure Jesus by the shadow he has cast into the world? No, by the light he has shed upon it. Shall we be told such a man never lived? the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived. But who did their works, and thought their thought? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus."

Mr. Parker is an outgrowth of Unitarianism; he stands at the head of one of the directions which that faith must always take. The opposite tendency must inevitably point towards evangelical belief. The creed that occupies the intermediate ground must suffer slow but sure disintegration, and fall into final neglect.

We pass, for the present, the admissions which have been made by the rationalistic school of Unitarianism, quoting first from a few only, of the many able and

excellent living representatives of which the conservative wing can be justly proud.

"Jesus," says Dr. Dewey, "is not an unmeaning figure in history; it is not one that can any way be passed by. On the contrary, in the entire range of all recorded knowledge of men, he is the most conspicuous personage; nay, he stands alone; he is taken up out of the range of all comparison; indeed, his isolation, the unapproachable solitariness of his grandeur, as men have conceived of it, has been greater than the wise and thoughtful may have wished; but so it is. Such is the ideal; so it exists and reigns, and has reigned for many ages."

Not unlike this admission is that of Dr. Hedge: "Nowhere but in Jesus has our nature reached so ostensibly its true perfection; and but for him we had not known what that nature is in its possibility and its calling, its highest and deepest capacity and strength."

"Through his sole mediation," says President Walker, — "that is to say, by his teachings and sufferings, by his life and death, — he has broken down forever the legal and ritual impediments which were thought to separate man from his Maker, and thus opened a way of access to the Father, 'once for all.' By a new and far more sublime revelation of grace, and truth, and spiritual freedom, he has opened to the whole world a door of access to the mercy-seat, and left it open; it is a door which no man, or body of men, can shut."

"Above all, the religious thought of the present age is modified by the voice of that Teacher," says Presi-

dent Hill, "who stands alone and unapproachable in the clearness of his vision of God; unlike all other teachers in the fulness and certainty of his knowledge."

"Whether we can fix the exact point of his elevation or not," says Dr. Eliot, "and however ignorant we may be of his essential nature, as indeed we are ignorant of our own, we have abundant evidence from his own words and demeanor, that he occupied an exceptional place, both in relation to God and man, to do a work peculiar to himself for the glory of God and for the salvation of the world."

Says Dr. Peabody, "You cannot, by any possibility, bring Jesus down to the level of ordinary humanity, into line with the men of his generation, or even into line with the great men of all times. His is the only character in history which has no secular parallel, which looks as great in the nineteenth century as in the first. His, too, was the most potent spirit that ever tenanted a human body. His teachings underlie all our modern civilization, all progress, all philanthropy; nor is there a maxim in the improved philosophy of life, of society, of commerce, of government, which has not emanated from his gospel, and which may not be retranslated, and for the better, into the very words that fell from his lips.

"He still appears, not one of a class, but a class by himself; not unequalled, but unapproached; not brightest among kindred luminaries, but sole sun, in whose rays the stars turn pale. . . . His heavenly birth-song, power, and transfiguration, seem to me only an exterior manifestation, belonging of right

to a spirit like his. . . . It was as natural that he should rise from the sepulchre as that we should sleep in it."

Dr. Peabody's references to Christ in connection with death in the household are, if possible, still more beautiful and impressive. "Only the family with which Christ is a welcome guest and a familiar friend can feel that its union is beyond the touch of death. Only as we are one in him can we be assured that we are one forever. Only he who gave Lazarus to his sisters can give us to one another, where there shall be no death and no parting."

"If there be one folly greater than another," says Dr. Bellows, "it is, in our day, the attempt to pronounce the gospel outworn, Christ a mere name among other great names, Christianity a superstition, and the church a prison for the intellect and a strait jacket for the will. . . .

"In Jesus Christ there broke into the world a mighty and shaping influence, a holy will, a spiritual sovereignty, an illuminating, warming, inspiring principle of mingled thought, affection, and volition, which was, among the other moral and spiritual influences at work upon the world of feeling and opinion, what the mighty Gulf Stream is among the other currents of the ocean — changing the temperature of the most distant seas, ameliorating the climates of far-off boreal shores, and modifying the navigation and the commerce of the globe. . . .

"Amid the good principalities and powers that are helping us on, and above them all, is the head of all principality and power, Christ and Christianity,

a principality and power the immeasurable significance and value of which cannot be exaggerated, and which it becomes us most gratefully and humbly to adore and glorify."

Dr. Sears's expressions of faith are essentially the same as those of Dr. Bellows. "As a teacher," he says of Jesus, "he dwelt upon this earth, drew disciples around him, lived out his life in the flesh, and thus embodied the system of gospel truth in his words and actions. The record of this constitutes what we call historical Christianity. It was the golden future of the old patriarchs and prophets, to which they ever looked forward; it is the golden past of the modern times, to which we ever turn back. There the heavens bent and kissed the plains; there the Eternal Word came down and touched the earth, and clothed itself in flesh and in human language, and thence it darts its radiances, backward and forward, through the ages. But the whole work which Christ did on the earth was preparatory to another, a higher and more interior work, which he was to accomplish afterwards. He went away from the earth that he might come nearer to it. He took up into his comprehensive experience all the weaknesses and woes of humanity, and then left them behind, and ascended as the glorified, — the fulness of the Godhead bodily, the Mediator, out of whom God might pass over into humanity, and sweep it through, and create a new consciousness within it."

James Freeman Clarke closes the list of those belonging to this wing of Unitarianism.* "Christ," he

* We would not convey the impression that Mr. Clarke belongs *exclusively* to this or any other wing of Unitarianism.

says, "was something more than mere man, — something more than Moses and Elijah, — something more than a man of great religious genius. The peculiarity of Christ was, that he was chosen by God's wisdom, and prepared by God's providence, to be the typical man of the race, — the God-man in whom the divine spirit and human soul become one in a perfect union. He was, perhaps, placed, by an exceptional birth, where the first Adam stood, rescued from inherited depravity, made in the image of God. Then the spirit was given him without measure. . . .

"The word of God dwelt in him, and did not merely come to him as a transient influence for a special purpose. The spirit in Christ was one with God.

"Is it any wonder, then, that men should have called Jesus God? that they should call him so still? In him truly 'dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' and this indwelling spirit expressed itself in what he said and what he did. When Jesus speaks, it is as if God speaks. When Jesus does anything, it is as if we saw God do it. It becomes to us an expression of the divine character. When Jesus says to the sinner, Go and sin no more, we see in this a manifestation not merely of his own compassion, but of God's forgiving love. . . . He is the image of the invisible God — the first-born of the whole creation."

The transition from the conservative to the better side of the opposite wing of Unitarianism, or Theistic Radicalism, is not so difficult as many imagine; it is to this better side we now allude, reserving extreme views for another section.

The writers are so many and so scattered, found, indeed, all the way between the right wing and the baldest infidelity, and their statements are so often apparently self-contradictory, that we shall be justified in merely and briefly calling attention to detached expressions which everywhere appear in radical publications, and from these deduce criticisms, and form our estimates.

Representative expressions are the following: —

"There never was a greater than Jesus," "he still presides over the destinies of the world," "the creator of the eternal religion of humanity," "his transcendent personality," "inspired originality of Jesus," "matchless penetration of genius," "a man of unprecedented originality and power of soul," "the highest historical teacher, grand exemplar of our race," "ideal of perfection," "the first of spiritual heroes," "the most royal soul of the race," "the best and truest symbol of heavenly wisdom," "a man so great as to touch the heavens," "a soul so pure as to be an organ of the Spirit of the Whole." "greater than his biographers have been able to make him," "without equal, and his glory will be revealed forever." "Jesus is the best embodiment of spiritualism, and the richest Judean outgrowth of the spiritual idea." *

Now, granting all that the most radical opponents in the rationalistic school have said respecting the mistakes, interpolations, and exaggerations of the gospel records, even after having subjected them to the most rigid criticism, and also putting comparatively moder-

* This concluding quotation is the confession of modern medium spiritualism.

ate estimates upon the admissions, direct and implied, in the above expressions, can the conclusion be avoided, that this language is either the product of a sentimentalism which is a reproach to the one possessing it, or else that it involves the confession that he who came into this world at the commencement of the Christian era was the most august personage of history, far transcending all human position and prestige.

A point is now reached in the investigation and argument where a pause must be made.*

We may first, however, avail ourselves of the advantage the position affords of glancing over the broad field through which we have passed. We set out with the distinct purpose of ascertaining *present estimates* respecting Jesus, based upon modern admissions other than those acknowledged to be evangelical. We have gathered testimonies from Germany, France, England, and America, and from all classes.

The object, it should be borne in mind, has not been, in these citations, to place the authors in false attitudes, or to show how evangelical they are, or in any way to

* Enough has been said, doubtless, to accomplish the purpose without longer detaining the reader with a review of American opinions, though there are a large number in this country as elsewhere belonging to the non-theological class, whose views form a distinct type. There are men who have risen to secular and professional distinction, who are of doubtful religious faith, classed, of course, by Liberals, as of their own number, whose words, nevertheless, when reference has been made to the subject, have been uniformly spoken in the interest and highest praise of the Lord Christ. Patrick Henry, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Rufus Choate may be taken as representatives.

array them upon the side of orthodoxy. We frankly confess that in many instances they are positively unevangelical, and much of the language they elsewhere employ appears in direct contradiction to truth and to the sentiments just quoted.

We may also add that while orthodoxy would gladly welcome many of these men to its ranks, if it could consistently do so, still (and this is spoken in all kindness), the Christian faith is not, and never has been, in pressing straits for the mere prestige of great names, and has never been driven to the shift of making up for lack of numbers by resorting to sweeping and groundless assertions and presumptions. We are sure opponents will not censure, but commend, these statements.

The exact statement of the case is this: Many of these writers from whom we have quoted are acknowledged to be profound scholars and original thinkers; they have studied with some degree of critical attention the life and character of Jesus, and upon strictly natural grounds, without the aid of Christian consciousness, have pronounced their decision, and in doing so have placed Jesus of the Gospels far above all others, making him the only religious character of all history able to respond to the world's everlasting search and aspiration. No other one, according to these admissions, has had such universal "quantity and quality of certificate." No other has had such choirs, composed of the loftiest intellects and mightiest kings, to chant his praises. There has been no other whose cathedral is acknowledged to be the whole world, "and whose anthem is as the voice of many waters." This array of opinions indicates, too, that no other being has been

thus obtrusive, ever standing in the way of all who refuse to recognize his exalted claim; whichever way men have turned in other investigations, whether in the fields of history, religion, human culture, or general civilization, and for whatever purpose the investigations have been prosecuted, friendly or otherwise, Christ has everywhere confronted them with his strange presence.

Men have said, "Jesus is dead and buried; let him alone." But it has not availed; he has risen hourly from the dead, and pervaded men's thoughts in spite of all their objecting and resolving. He is the ever-recurring enigma to be solved, the hard problem to be wrought out and demonstrated.

Theorists have said to him, "Thou, who hast killed the old religions, thou who hast divided history in twain, and begun a new order of ages, and hast deeply affected all human interests, — who art thou? Give us more proofs of thy rights over us than Gospels and their fruits in the world afford." Like Herod, men long to see some miracle done by him. But he keeps a dead silence, only bidding them forsake their sins.

They raise this and that objection; they pare down the gospel, they lop off myths; but still there he stands, to be accounted for; and without taking time to fully investigate the evidences and solve the problem, these men of science and literature have been silenced, filled with amazement, have spoken a single word or two, and then have engaged in other fields of speculation.

Now, pressing these admissions, coming from such a great variety of sources, to their logical issue, and holding in mind these other considerations; keeping in view

also the unfavorable circumstances of family and nation among which Jesus appeared; such, indeed, that his strange life and character must have been originated and sustained in spite of them, — considering all these things, does not this array of opinions necessitate a preternatural and divine presence and force as the only possible ground of explanation? What! gain such applause, nay, adoration, wrung from such multitudes of unwilling hearts, and still be only Joseph's son?

Were it not for departing from the immediate connection, we might advance another step, and insist upon something more explicit from these writers who have admitted so much. Is it not incumbent upon them, especially upon those who are professed religious teachers, to set forth more explicitly what they really mean? They do not hesitate to be definite, positive, and even dogmatic elsewhere; why not meet these involved questions more squarely, instead of saying much, and then smothering the much that remains under ominous silence?

Nay, when sceptics agree with believers in their testimony and admissions; when converted heathen, of every age and nation, rise up to call him blessed; when fifty generations of men, on the broadest and brightest field of human culture, have given him their entire homage, or else have emphasized and re-echoed the words of the Roman governor, "We find in him no fault at all," — is it not evidence conclusive that the simple, unbiassed, and irresistible impression has somehow forced itself upon human conviction, that Jesus was not the son of man — unless he was also the Son of God?

VII.

CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS.

ESTIMATES based upon universal Christian consciousness or belief next claim attention. They are not so frequently introduced into the general argument as other considerations; still they appear no less important. The fact and distinctive nature of this consciousness cannot, indeed, be overlooked in this discussion, for they lie directly across our pathway. Its character, whatever it be, must modify all estimates.

There are certain principles, universally conceded, which furnish analogies and lift the subject, in a measure, above seeming obscurity.

Conditions and qualifications, for illustration, are found involving every namable object of perception or conception; why may not this also be true respecting spiritual discernment and insight?

No one, we trust, will be inclined to question the accuracy of Andrew Fuller's statement that divine subjects "exhibit a beauty and a life utterly incomprehensible to an unholy mind."

"Our eyes are holden," says Emerson, "that we

cannot see things that stare us in the face, until the time arrives when the mind is ripened; then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream."

The same principle is embodied in the maxim, "He whose eyes are forever on the dust cannot see the stars."

"To many minds," says Plato, "there must come a moral improvement before they can receive any intellectual enlightenment."

Why may not Jesus therefore be correct when saying that men must come to him before they can understand him? That is, one must belong to the brotherhood of any order before he can understand the grip and password; the countersign is given to a friend, not an enemy. One must have eyesight before he can pronounce upon colors. It was not flesh and blood that revealed a certain truth unto Simon Peter.* There are some things, all admit which can never be approached or comprehended until men have passed through an experience.†

Can one while in the valley do well in measuring the surrounding mountains with his pocket tape meas-

* John xvi. 17.

† The implied necessity of a change in character in order to fully apprehend the true, beautiful, and good, is seen in all pantheistic and philosophical writers. That this character may be attained, they speak of a time when the soul must "bestir itself and struggle as if in the throes of birth," that it must "turn in loathing from the pleasures of sense," have "irrepressible longings" for what is pure, pass through a "crisis of internal life," come into "a noble and perfect manhood," that it may "feel around it the fresh breath of the open sky, and over it the clear smile of heaven."

ure? A man entirely destitute of musical taste says, "I am now to appreciate and pronounce upon the sublime symphonies of Beethoven." You reply, and correctly, "Impossible!"

A zealous objector once said to John Newton, "I have carefully examined the New Testament, and can find there no proof of the Trinity."

"Do you know what happened to me last night?" replied Newton.

"Well, what?"

"When going to my bedroom I wondered why I could not light my lamp; but upon examination I found I had been attempting to do so with the extinguisher on." *

* The thought is well expressed in the Marble Faun. "Christian faith is a grand cathedral, with divinely-pictured windows. Standing without, you can see no glory, nor can possibly imagine any; standing within, every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendors."

Pascal carries the thought one step farther, calling attention to a condition. "Divine truths," he says, "reach the spirit through the heart. We must love divine things in order to know them. Christianity reveals herself to those only who possess a sincere longing to know her."

Much like this of Pascal is the statement of M. Athanase Coquerel. "We find in Christ the centre of religion, and it is only in following his steps that we find the real truth that brings us nearer and nearer to God."

Says Dr. Congreve, the priest of English Comteists, "The more truly you serve Christ, and the more thoroughly you mould yourself into his image, the more keen will be your sympathy and admiration."

"He who would see Christ transfigured," says some writer

The point in the illustration, and indeed the entire principle upon these general grounds, are too apparent to justify further elucidation or statement. What has now been said seeks merely to gain an admission of the possibility of a distinct faculty, or a quickened power of soul which may be termed Christian or Christ consciousness, and we presume that the point sought will be granted.

Those who place any reliance upon the accuracy of New Testament statements respecting this and kindred subjects will still find abundant evidence of the possibility, and also direct statements as to the actual existence, of this spiritual insight.*

whose name we have forgotten, "must climb the hill; below are crowds, demoniacs, and faithless disciples."

"The Christian religion can be held in highest esteem," as M. Guizot correctly remarks, "by those only who are best acquainted with it."

* "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Matt. xi. 25–27.

"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." John v. 36–38.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the

In addition to this. Christian experience renders a positive and overwhelming verdict and indorsement.

sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." John x. 2, 3, 14.

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Cor. ii. 7–16.

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. xii. 3.

"We have an altar whereof they cannot eat which serve the tabernacle." Heb. xiii. 10.

Other confirmatory passages are Psalms xxv. 9, cxix. 18; John xiv. 22; Ephesians ii. 8.

The subject, as referred to this class of testimony, may be stated thus: Some of the most intelligent men of Christendom have confessed that Jesus was to them, prior to a given date, external. They read with admiration the wonderful deeds of his life, they discovered marvellous beauties in his character, and spoke grand words in his praise; but afterwards, in addition to this intellectual admiration, and by means of what seemed to be an experience based upon a new faculty, Jesus remained to them no longer merely external and objective, but he penetrated the heart; there resulted Christian or Christ consciousness; a something naturally distinct from, but added to the human soul; at least so it appears to Christian faith.

It is worthy of note also that this Christian consciousness affords, according to the testimony of nearly every soul born into the kingdom of God, not only a clear recognition of the deity of Christ, but likewise a firm faith in all the great doctrines in any way related to him. The incarnation, for illustration, is found to give support to personal holiness, and is fully recognized as the key to all human history, only as seen by the spiritual eye.

This faculty is also discovered to be the agency, and the sole agency, which can transfer the sacrifice of Christ in its grandeur, and possibly in its effectiveness, to the consciousness of the believer.

Sacrificial atonement likewise, in its most majestic bearing, is confessed to be absolutely above the apprehension of the intellect, however purified; its vital comprehension and significance belong exclusively to those quickened and added intuitions and affections of

the regenerated soul. Perhaps, therefore, Lange is right in saying that "no man was ever truly redeemed who did not, by repentance, sympathetically receive in his own bosom Christ's atoning suffering as the verdict."

In addition to this, it may be stated, upon the ground of testimony and observation, that the whole work of gospel redemption is accepted or rejected in proportion as the deity of Christ is accepted or rejected; and this, in its true essence, is embraced if one is in possession of Christian consciousness; otherwise it is held in suspense, or ignored. If the attitude be one of suspense, it is heart-doubt, no faith rather than anti-faith — a position which must result, sooner or later, in belief or denial, according as the life is one of purity and seeking, or of sin and frivolity.

No one, we presume, will question the additional statement, that the better men are understood, the deeper will become the conviction that the divinity of Christ and the involved doctrines are set aside by those only who are either resolved upon indulging for a time in practices which are not in accordance with our Lord's precepts, or by those who are not acquainted with the true spirit of the gospel. Moral obliquity or mental limitations are the two comprehensive occasions of errors of judgment respecting divine truth.*

* There is not a little testimony at hand which goes to show that in civilized lands it is obliquity quite as often as ignorance which so seriously affects and damages our theology. "As are the inclinations," says Goethe, "so are the opinions." "It is the heart," says Neander, "which makes the theologian." "The answers," says Julius Müller, "which

Here, then, is a faculty dependent for its exercise upon quickened intelligence and purity of heart; an intelligence that is not of this world, and a purity which God provides and bestows upon hearts willing and waiting to receive it.

As might be expected, this new faculty — Christian consciousness — differs from God-consciousness. The one, as we have seen, is universal; the other is limited, and depends upon direct revelation and a new personal experience. It differs likewise from the felt necessity and intense longing for a Mediator, which is also a datum of essential and universal theology. It is rather an after-work, the felt apprehension of Christ; nay, the full and ripened consciousness of his personal presence in the heart.

Essential or natural Christology, which has its sway before conversion, — better before regeneration, — furnishes notions respecting Christ, head-thoughts; it also allows of affections and admiration for the personal excellence of the man Jesus.

Revealed Christology and Christian consciousness, which are the soul's informers after regeneration, fur-

Truth gives to a man depend very much upon the questions which he puts to Truth."

"Our system of thought," says Fichte, "is often only the history of our heart;" and again, "Men do not will according to their reason, but reason according to their will."

Shakespeare is certainly unquestioned authority upon matters of human nature: —

"For when we in our viciousness grow hard,
O misery on't! the wise gods seal our eyes;
. . . make us
Adore our errors, laugh at us while we strut
To our confusion."

nish heart-thoughts respecting Christ; it also inspires affection for the deity of Christ, which hitherto had been concealed under the person of the Nazarene.

Essential Christology reaches its maximum in some of the better representative thinkers of the ancient world, and in modern times in the better types of Unitarianism. The intellect in these instances, purified and fully aglow, receiving sympathy from other faculties and powers of one's being, including the normal action of the heart, is able to utter expressions which can be distinguished from true Christian sentiment and experience only with closest attention. But the Christology of a regenerated soul dares, in its best, really in its normal moments, to think of Christ as none other than God.

That heart, and we may add that heart only, which has been enlightened by Christian consciousness, is able to feel continually palpitating beneath the thin vesture of the external Jesus the true, the beautiful, the good, the absolute and eternal, even all the fulness and glory of God, and God himself, in no fanciful sense, but actually. Nay, the initiated man knows, in his secret, sacred, and inmost soul, that Christ and God are one.*

* The confession of Henry More furnishes a good illustration of this point. "For the light within me — that is, my reason and conscience — does assure me that the ancient and apostolic faith, according to the historical meaning thereof, and in the literal sense of the creed, is solid and true."

Mr. Hepworth's sincerity is called in question by many, but we do not see how his confession could be stated more satisfactorily. "I cannot resist the feeling — it has grown partly out of the way in which I read the Bible, and partly out of my own religious consciousness — that Christ's life and God's life are inextricably interwoven and interlaced."

Other characteristics of Christ-consciousness are of such a nature, and afford so great delight to the believer, as to demand at least recognition, though not full discussion.

It attains its conclusions, for illustration, intuitively rather than by processes of reasoning. The soul is enabled to leap as by one earnest bound to those grand results and conceptions which lie entirely and forever beyond the reach of rule and method.

Yet it does not ignore known truth and fact, whenever or wherever met, but makes "a short-hand registration" of them, and then, without delay or exhaustion, settles, satisfactorily to itself, the most momentous questions that have been propounded to human hearts. This spiritual perception is always attended by the purest and most lofty scope of intelligence; its freest exercise cannot take place, indeed, save while the man is fully within the doors of the royal kingdom of divine knowledge and truth.*

* We should greatly misrepresent our position did we seem, in what has previously been said, to introduce a plea for mental ignorance. In other connections we would urge the importance of distinctive mental culture and general information with all the force and warmth of unqualified argument; but in its place, this of which we now speak demands no less emphasis or exclusive representation. To know, is no less the motto of the believer than the sceptic; to attain belief is, perhaps, no less the motto of the honest sceptic than the believer. There is a difference between them; but the difference is one of method and emphasis. "Know that you may believe," is the creed of the one. "Believe that you may know," is that of the other. To belief, in the Christian scheme, all knowledge, sooner or later, is to be added.

This consciousness is likewise accompanied by a feeling of relief from guilt. The vision of Christ which it affords inspires confidence, and the contact with Christ which it imparts restores to the consciousness the innocence of childhood. The relation of sacrificial atonement and pardon, is seen at a glance — rather, felt as a fact. Even should the man, but *one moment* before the consciousness is bestowed, actually see the "serpent twining round his limbs, and feel the serpent's poison beating in his blood, and see over all his beauty and glory the serpent-defiling trail," the next moment he may feel the serpent yield its hold, and see it fall at his feet helpless and dead, and perceive also the poison gone from his blood, and the beauty and glory of his manhood more than restored.

There is likewise afforded the most intimate nearness to the Deity. No longer is Christ felt to be a Jew, but he is of the regenerated man's own nationality and family. The nearness is so wonderful that it almost amounts to oneness. "To both Christ and himself," as Luther expresses it, "possessions, hap, mishap, and all things become common. What Christ has, is the believing soul's; what the soul has, becomes Christ's. If Christ has all possessions and blessedness, they become the soul's. If the soul has all vice and sin on it, they become Christ's."

That strange language of the apostle Paul, who was the most clear-headed of all the disciples, in which he came near confounding his own personality with that of Christ, is familiar to all: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now

live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." *

And when a late convert to belief in the deity of Christ gives the following expression to his Christian consciousness, "I feel that God has given to me Jesus Christ, who will lead me up to the Father, and I can stand by the side of the Lord, and he will stand by my side, and will put his hand around my waist, and walk with me, and will put his arm through mine, and I shall feel the genial touch of God himself," † it must be admitted that the language sounds much like "irreverent rhetoric," as a reviewer has characterized it. But it is very far from being "irreverent" in the judgment of the great multitude of those who know Christ "experimentally." It is rather the expression of an emotion which is felt by every true believer in Christ, Christendom through.

This conscious nearness brings much else that is of solid value. These *informed* souls rest their well-being upon Christ, in all respects, present and future, with the most perfect composure. The head is pillowed as upon his bosom. When he speaks, it is felt to be, not peradventure, but *verily*.

Such men feel that Christ would forsake heaven and create another, if they were excluded, sooner than leave them without, in darkness. From every realm there are spoken to such hearts divine assurances. Tempests burst in their fury upon them, but amid clouds and shrouds they always behold the face of their Father. The way is found, the believer no longer gropes, it is delightful walking. The path he has

* Gal. ii. 20. † Hepworth.

entered, ever charming and refreshing, winds up among the hills of God. New strength and light are afforded at every advance. The accumulated resources are immense; all the wealth of the supernatural world seems at command. A voice divine speaks to the heart, and a breath wafted from another sphere greets and revives.

In addition to this, the composure and conviction of Christian consciousness are so deep and well established, that while it is retained and made the court of appeal, and while the life is pure and good, nothing can disturb it. Doubts hitherto troublesome disappear, in some instances at once, in other cases gradually. These heart affections and reconciliations must be whelmed or destroyed before the spiritual eye suffers blindness. Intellectual difficulties have no weight, because they are of an entirely different character, and belong not to this divinely guarded sphere of thought.

This is the reason, also, why argument the most powerful, when addressed merely to the intellect of the believer, cannot reach or disturb his faith. He quickly perceives that what is "logically impregnable" may be "spiritually false," and awaits patiently the arrival of additional data, which he has every reason to presume will confirm his faith and overthrow the hitherto "logically impregnable."

These grand, intelligent, yet child-like sympathies pass by all surface objections, "just as a little child moves among the riddles of nature and of life as if they existed not." *

* Strauss anticipated, from observation doubtless, what would be, and what in fact has been, the verdict of the

When told by the unbelievng that Christ was merely man, and that Christianity is dead, those who have received this divine installation wonder, and pity the ignorance from which spring the announcements.

In the presence of this simple yet sublime faith, the whole broad horizon of Christian truth is lighted up with an effulgence new and transforming.*

religious sense of humanity respecting his mythical Life of Jesus. "The results of our inquiry," he says in his closing chapter, "have apparently annihilated the greatest and most important part of that which the Christian has been wont to believe concerning his Jesus; have uprooted all the encouragements which he has derived from his faith, and deprived him of all his consolations. The boundless stores of truth and life which, for eighteen hundred years, have been the aliment of humanity, seem irretrievably devastated, the most sublime levelled with the dust, God divested of his grace, man of his dignity, and the tie between heaven and earth broken. Piety turns away with horror from so fearful an act of desecration, and, strong in the impregnable self-evidence of its faith, boldly pronounces that — let an audacious criticism attempt what it will — all that the Scriptures declare and the church believes of Christ will still subsist as eternal truth; nor need one iota of it be renounced."

And the reason that not "one iota" will be renounced is, that this critical review by one who seemingly, as events have turned, could have been otherwise better employed, does not recognize the majestic and all-convincing power of Christian consciousness — this added heart faculty which no man can confer, which no money can purchase, and which no reasoning, however forcibly addressed to the head, can, in the least, affect or remove.

* "The gospel," writes Von Müller, "is the fulfilment of all hopes, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of all revelations, the key to all the seeming contradictions of the physical and moral world. Since I have known the Saviour, everything is clear."

The really converted man is surprised at his former ignorance, and in time comes to look upon it, not as a reality, but a dream. He is, perhaps, not sufficiently charitable towards those who are still in the darkness. He has forgotten how the world appeared under the exclusive dominion of a different consciousness.

Another grand feature of Christian consciousness is, that there is nothing in its nature which prevents its being as universal as natural consciousness. Given the historic Jesus, or in his absence the ideal Jesus, together with a willingness and purpose to accept him, and this truly "new" and "advanced" light will dawn upon the soul, be it cultivated or illiterate, be the place Boston or Bombay. Christianity has ever taken the bold and positive position that when one is willing to accept Jesus as divine, then the soul shall come into possession of this spiritual perception of things divine, and *know*, not merely from external, but from internal, or experimental evidence, that he of Nazareth was the Lord Christ, and superhuman.* And there is no case on record where this test has been patiently and honestly applied in which humanity has suffered disappointment.

The nature of Christian consciousness is not, however, such as to preclude the lapsing of individual Christians. Such fearful falls as are sometimes witnessed appear to many inexplicable; but they are not.

If one steps out of the Way and enters the sphere of head-thought, — being a free agent he can do this, — must he not expect, in relation to Christian truth, to be involved in confusion, discrepancies, and difficulties

* John vii. 17.

more or less embarrassing? The head reports well for itself, but is a poor reporter of the heart. Jacobi should not be too severely criticised when saying, "I am a Christian in feeling, but a heathen in philosophy. There is light in my heart which goes out when I bring it into my head." *

Or, again, if the believer is tempted, and in consequence falls into an impure life, can he expect to retain his heart-thought of Christ, or the charming experiences and thrilling apprehensions which belong only to holiness?

It is no matter of wonder, upon philosophical grounds, that men are backsliders, or that some who once understood, now talk of Christ in language of hypocrisy, though based upon faint recollections of what once was, or that Christians sometimes flash downward, meteor-like, somewhere from heaven, and are buried completely in the dust; for these men, be they backsliders, hypocrites, or apostates, have lost their spiritual consciousness as really and effectually as natural or brain consciousness is lost from a heavy blow dealt on the head. Such fallen men are spiritually dead!

These same considerations should lead unbelievers to be more considerate in many of their judgments. If one man may have certain faculties in healthy exercise which others have not, — and of this there can be no question, — then the believer may have a knowledge

* This reminds one of Goethe's apparently contradictory statement: "I cannot be contented with one way of thinking. As artist and poet I am polytheist; as naturalist I am pantheist."

of which another is totally ignorant. The objector may often have only the remotest conception of what he condemns. Human judgments of things are correct in proportion only to acquaintance with them; cannot the right to judge of religious truth, therefore, be properly denied all who have not experimental knowledge of it?

It is in view of such principles that the sceptical school should be quite respectful and modest in presence of what is, from the nature of things, far beyond its comprehension.

There is no difficulty in apprehending how naturally Thomas Paine fell into error respecting the nature of the Christian religion and of biblical truth. "I know not how the printers have pointed the passage," he says, when criticising the Scriptures, "*for I keep no Bible.*"

The same may be said of David Hume, who confessed, late in life, that he "had never read the Bible with attention." It is but little that can be expected from such limited knowledge. It is not surprising that "Truth, who buys not and sells not, goes on her way, and makes no answer" to all such.

Reverting to an illustration already employed, can we reasonably expect a blind man to go into ecstasies over a well-clad rose-bush even, or the most gorgeous sunset? There must, from necessity, be false and imperfect conceptions, if there be the lack of a faculty upon which correct conceptions are absolutely dependent for production or recognition.

The sceptic, therefore, is to be censured upon other grounds than the simple want of knowledge; it is

rather from presuming to discuss, and to pass under wholesale condemnation, matters respecting which — it were so much better for him to remain silent.*

We are also enabled, in view of what has been said, to place just estimates upon those sceptical opinions respecting Jesus which have been already cited.

While they are very important in their legitimate

* Carlyle passed the following severe, but in every way just, criticism upon Voltaire: "But it is a much more serious ground of offence that he intermeddled in religion without being himself, in any measure, religious; that he entered the temple, and continued there, with a levity, which, in any temple where men worship, can beseem no brother man; that, in a word, he ardently, and with long-continued effort, warred against Christianity, without understanding beyond the mere superficies what Christianity was."

Carlyle's more general observation admirably applies to others than Voltaire. "We believe, also, that the wiser minds of our age have already come to agreement on this question; or rather never were divided regarding it. Christianity, the 'worship of sorrow,' has been recognized as divine on far other grounds than Essays on Miracles, and by considerations infinitely deeper than would avail in any mere 'trial by jury.' He who argues against it, or for it, in this manner, may be regarded as mistaking its nature; the Ithuriel, though to our eyes he wears a body and the fashion of armor, cannot be wounded with material steel.

"Our fathers were wiser than we, when they said in deepest earnestness what we often hear in shallow mockery, that religion is not of sense, but of faith; not of understanding, but of reason. He who finds himself without the latter, who, by all his studying, has failed to unfold it in himself, may have studied to great or to small purpose, we say not which; but of the Christian religion, as of many other things, he has, and can have, no knowledge."

connection, as showing to what high position Jesus is elevated by the means of purely intellectual inference, they have no application or value respecting Christian consciousness or heart-estimates.

Referring to the fragmentary expressions of the radical school,* we frankly confess that we can see in them nothing distinctively Christian. Such words of praise, it is true, indicate an intellectual assent to the marvellous and pre-eminent character and life of Jesus.

But when we recall other adverse statements from these same writers, we do not hesitate to assert, that their praises seem to have been wrung from reluctant hearts; the men who utter them may not be outwardly immoral or impure, they may not be Jews, Mohammedans, or Buddhists, but certainly they are far, perhaps very far, from being *Christians;* and are they not, as some of their own number assert, inconsistent in not at once discarding the terms Christian and Christianity, while maintaining their present position? †

Again, when a critical examination is made of expressions from a class of Unitarian writers, who are neither extremely radical nor yet strictly with Channing in their faith, can we escape the conviction that they are in reality destitute of Christian consciousness? Otherwise, would they employ language so fundamentally at variance with the Godhead of Christ?

Unable to give any but a negative answer to the question, we must rule out their words, as not belonging to this class of argument. The grandest parade possible of capital H's in the pronouns His and Him

* See page 317. † Appendix, R.

by no means constitutes effective faith in Jesus Christ. When Dr. Hedge, for instance, coolly remarks that all we behold in Christ "is essentially human, and although, providentially, officially he occupies a place peculiar to himself, psychologically there was nothing in him that is not, in its germ and possibility, in all men, and which all, in the full unfolding of their humanity, may not hope to realize;" when Mr. Tenney, in his Ten Points of Difference between Unitarianism and Orthodoxy, says, "I believe that, while all men are the sons of God, Jesus Christ was pre-eminently *the* 'Son of God,' the chosen and best-beloved Son in a moral likeness to, and spiritual sympathy with, the one God; in him I see reflected the attributes of the infinite God, acting on a finite scale; he is to me the type of perfected human nature, allowing all of God morally to manifest himself through him; . . . but I believe him to have been the son of Joseph and Mary;" and when James Freeman Clarke says, in substance, that what is true of Jesus is true of many other men, except in degree, then the least we can say — and we say it in all kindness — is, that we do not comprehend how it is possible for these men to thus represent or misrepresent Christ, and to be at the same time in the possession of a Christ-consciousness — the most essential element of a Christian consciousness.

But when we advance upon the still more conservative Unitarian ground, and refer to individuals, we are aware of the extreme delicacy of our position. These conservative Unitarians, represented by such admirable names as Channing, Peabody, Robbins, and Hale,

who have given quite uniform expressions, which, in not a few instances, it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish from the product of professed and genuine Christian consciousness, demand profound respect, and we are reluctant not to clasp their hand, and invite them without hesitation to our communion. But must we not be candid, as well as generous?

If we allow that these confessions are the product of the heart-thought, instead of the highest and purest head-thought, it would be to say that these Unitarian gentlemen, by the most rigid test that can possibly be applied, are Christians, and that there is no distinguishing them from the most orthodox believer.

On the other hand, to say that these admissions are the product of a purified intellect, and not of a Christ-consciousness, would be to say that the authors, judging from their expressions merely, are not Christians; and to say this would array against us all their admirers. Hurtful comparisons, too, between professed Christians of far from faultless lives,* and the unquestioned purity of these distinguished and exemplary men, would be at once instituted.

It would also be affirmed that, if humanity can attain such excellence and devotion through the head-

* We say it with grief, but there are, it is to be feared, not a few in the church who are destitute of Christian consciousness. Such moral obliquity and spiritual blindness as are sometimes witnessed seem utterly incompatible with its presence in the heart.

And may we not hope that there are not a few who are not enrolled in the visible church, who are nevertheless in conscious communion with Christ?

consciousness, then the heart-consciousness is altogether unnecessary.

These difficulties, and many others growing therefrom, are beyond measure perplexing, and a treatment of them will always be peculiarly embarrassing.

Though freely reviewing these matters of opinion, there is no attempt at final settlement, and there will be throughout a disposition to "liberality" of judgment.

May it not be possible, it is sometimes asked, that this class of thinkers whose views are under consideration are Christian at heart; that the few expressions to which exception may be taken by orthodox believers are the product of head-thoughts, and that while uttering them, they, like Jacobi, have merely removed, for a time, the light from the heart into the head?

The difficulty with this supposition is, to understand how men of such pure hearts and clear heads, if in full possession of Christian consciousness, can, in these late times, fall into such apparent misconceptions of Christ as elsewhere appear in their writings.

This is a difficulty so perplexing, we are free to confess, as to pass beyond the limits of satisfactory solution.

Or may it not be, that they really enjoy the Christian faith, but retain their connection with the Unitarian body under a slightly false coloring, in order that they may not lose influence, hoping thereby to do more in the end for Christ than open rupture would allow?

The intention in such case may be commendable; but is a position of this sort altogether creditable? Without good evidence, we are hardly disposed to im-

pute motives so questionable to men so honorable and aboveboard in all other matters as are these New England representatives of conservative Unitarianism.

But is it not possible, it is again asked, that their present position is one of seeking and transition; that their condition is like the blind man's in the gospel, whose sight was but partially restored; and while education and social connections — cords not easily severed — may retain them for a time, that soon the noble confessions which have been heard from Huntington, Osgood, and Hepworth will adorn their own higher tributes of praise rendered to the Christ of God?

This is perhaps the more satisfactory supposition; still, the time for taking this step from partial to perfect faith seems unnecessarily protracted.

But if the supposition be correct, these Unitarian friends, and all of like opinions, may rest assured, when the time comes that they will no longer give their influence in support of all forms of Unitarianism, and against Orthodoxy, and will allow themselves to be classed as friends and allies, that then the evangelical church will be only too happy to welcome them to its broad fellowship and grand communion.

But in the mean time we may be pardoned for merely holding in suspense their noble confessions concerning Jesus, in relation to the subject now under review. Time may give us more light, and add to their testimony a consideration vitally important and convincing.

Enough has now been said respecting the nature and products of Christian consciousness in its relations to Christ, and discriminations sufficiently close

have been drawn, to enable us to judge with some degree of accuracy respecting the weight and force of its report concerning the general questions under examination.

Notice, then, certain admitted principles and facts. It will be conceded, in the first place, we presume, that the quickened and the purely spiritual faculties of the soul render testimony at once the most unqualified and satisfactory. Eyesight, in its ordinary observation, is not so reliable as soul-sight, in its peculiar sphere. It is in relation to such truth-attesting powers of soul that we examine facts and products of every class and character. Unless, then, modern philosophy is fundamentally in error, must not these spiritually awakened faculties, whose report is sought respecting Christ, be relied upon, if anything can be?

Again, the decisions of this Christian consciousness, from the earliest dates to the present time, have been characterized as a matter of fact by as perfect uniformity respecting Jesus as has attended the decisions of ordinary human consciousness respecting the most manifest truths and the most ordinary affairs of life.

Different words and symbols, it is true, have been frequently employed, but close inspection, in case of all who profess a definite Christian experience, will discover that the thing symbolized is essentially the same. This thought finds support in numberless analogies. One man, for illustration, may call Niagara "grand," another "sublime," still another "very fine;" and yet the impression of which the soul is conscious may be essentially the same in each instance.

Different expressions respecting any object may

arise, not from different conceptions of it, in every case, but from differences of habit or education, or from limited or enlarged vocabulary. So of expressions respecting Christ.

The minor differences that divided Augustine and the Greek Church, Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Whitefield, can thus be accounted for, and by no means do they affect the general argument.

Nor can the actual truth be ascertained, or judged of, by reference to the "incautious flights of some orthodox sermons." The expression and symbol of faith are too often not well chosen.

Without in the least endangering the truth, we may also admit that many of the early symbols employed to express Christian doctrine have justly been "allowed silently to fall into disuse, as beyond the proper range of human thought and human language," and that many others will doubtless follow in their wake.

This is not to be regretted, so long as the truth changes not. It is very doubtful if the world has yet discovered the scientific statement or symbol for the Trinity, and for other Christian doctrines, which is entirely satisfactory to universal Christian consciousness. The Scriptures have not given it. They leave us, as Nature does, to discover the science and definite statement of things.*

The thought we would here clearly set forth and insist upon is independent of definite formula or symbol; it is, that Christian consciousness, though employing different terms, and giving varying scientific

* An illustration of this feature of revelation is found in the Principia of Newton and the Cosmos of Humboldt.

descriptions, has been absolutely uniform in this testimony, — *that Jesus Christ is very God.**

It is also to be borne in mind, that this verdict has been rendered, not by limited numbers, or by men of limited intelligence, but in lands enjoying the highest degree of civilization and culture, and also by multitudes of the loftiest intellects and purest hearts, and of the most exemplary lives, which have adorned society for the past eighteen centuries. They are of such character, that the criticism sometimes made, that Christians have come to their conclusions simply from hearsay, or merely from force of example, is trivial and contemptible. Especially is this the case when the application is made to the faith of the multitudes who, at the present time, are accepting Christian truth and doctrine.

Late generations, as a matter of fact, are questioners, and do not accept statements as authority, unless convinced of their truthfulness. There is at present none too much regard on the part of children for the views and beliefs of parents, and none too much reverence for ancestry. †

The real fact in the case is this: Christianity would

* Appendix, S.

† In these times, as a facetious writer has facetiously expressed it, "each generation strangles and devours its predecessor. The young Feegeian carries a cord in his girdle for his father's neck; the young American, a string of propositions or syllogisms in his brain, with which to finish the same relative. The old man says, 'Son, I have swallowed and digested the wisdom of the past;' the young man says, 'Sir, I proceed to swallow and digest thee, with all thou knowest.'"

vanish in a day under the light of modern investigation, were it chiefly dependent upon tradition and hearsay. Were it not, in fine, in full possession of the immutable evidences of Christian conviction, and did it not effectually satisfy human want, it would not live an hour. Christians are as honest as sceptics; they would, upon the above supposition, instantly brand Christianity as an impostor, dismiss, nay, drive it from their churches, and trample into the dust all its observances and symbolism.

Equally incorrect is the claim that a multitude of adherents add nothing to the probabilities that a given belief is true. Such a fact, on the contrary, adds overwhelming evidence, and will be so admitted by all who understand the deep meaning underlying popular beliefs, especially when supported by learning and general intelligence.*

In the light of these facts and conditions, consider, for a moment, the array of witnesses as they present themselves, even from the dawn of the Christian era to present times.

What grand names appear during the apostolic age! Men of unquestioned integrity and devotion, who were martyrs to the deep and abiding convictions of their Christian consciousness, rendered testimony at

* Spencer states the case strongly: "A belief which gains extensive reception without critical examination, is thereby proved to have a general congruity with the various other beliefs of those who receive it; and in so far as these various other beliefs are based upon personal observation and judgment, they give an indirect warrant to the one with which they harmonize."

once definite, intelligent, and of the most striking uniformity.

What distinguished names, too, adorn the apologetic period! The wisest men of the world were they; men who constituted the repositories of the world's learning and philosophy, and whose piety equalled their wisdom. Though sometimes unsatisfactory in their labored and metaphysical statements, they were clear as sunlight in the testimony of their Christian faith and consciousness. Such the report of all historians of that period.

During the middle ages, also, there was, among those who could lay any real claim to Christian faith, an ever-growing and deepening conviction respecting the deity of Jesus Christ.*

When Anselm, the Plato of the middle ages; Thomas Aquinas, the philosopher and moralist of Italy; Thomas à Kempis, of France, some of whose writings are as fresh to-day as when first written; when Abelard, whose skill was more than a match for the most distinguished masters of his times, and St. Victor Hugo, Peter Lombard, William Occam, and such men as Eckart and Tauler, of Germany; and when such

* Ever after the Council of Nice, if there was wavering in the Catholic world as to the two natures, divine and human, in one person, it was in favor, not of the human, but of the divine. The conviction of Christ's deity rose to such a pitch at times, as almost to eliminate his humanity; and in order to secure his unmixed divinity, his mother was theoretically made a goddess. All this is by no means surprising, for Christian consciousness reports not of Christ's human, but of his divine character: the human may almost be said to stand in the way of the divine.

bodies of believers as the Huguenots, Waldenses, Nestorians, and Catholics, all through those times, clung to the formula Verus Homo, Verus Deus, *very man*, and *very God*, all question as to the position and faith of the scholars, and of the great body of believers during the middle ages, should be forever settled and silenced.

Coming down to comparatively modern times, and passing through the countries already traversed while in search of sceptical testimony, we are met by a list of high and worthy supporters of Christian faith and doctrine.

Mosheim, Ernesti, Euler, Haller, Gellert, Zollikofer, Bengel, Zinzendorf, Herder, Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Neander, Olshausen, Dorner, Rothe, Hengstenberg, Stahl, Krummacher, Hagenbach, Tholuck, Lange, Lücke, Ullmann, Stier, Gieseler, Kurtz, and Guericke, nobly and resolutely confirm the truth of past ages.

And these renowned Germans possessed qualities of intelligence and virtue of such an order that the New England supporters of infidelity, while combating their faith, appear to signal disadvantage, if not in striking insignificance.

Scarcely less important is the support derived from those distinguished Frenchmen whose names are a perpetual good report from that country so often plunged in error.

Calvin, Pascal, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Fénelon, La Rue, Massillon, Saurin, Vinet, D'Aubigné, Gaussen, the two Monods, Cuvier, and Ampère, Descartes, Corneille, Lamartine, Racine, and Louis XIV. are witnesses whose testimony it is difficult for modern unbe-

lievers to impeach, and whose grasp of intellect raises them high above the puerile criticisms of the day, which venture to class them among the duped of mankind.

The list of Englishmen is too full to find complete representation in these pages.

Berkeley, Cromwell, Locke, Milton, Boyle, De Quincey, Brewster, Faraday, Whewell, and the entire list of English Christian poets, are a few of the many men whose intelligence ranks among that of the most lofty, and whose characters have been no less lofty than their intelligence.*

Distinguished Americans who have been, and still are, representatives of Christian faith, are too familiar to need mention. They have been among the most honored of the nation's rulers, statesmen, and judges; the most distinguished of her divines, reformers, teachers, men of letters, and men of science.

And does it not indicate, in view of the number and character of these Christian believers, an amount of arrogance hardly conceivable in men who have not completely lost their wits, when modern infidels and

* To these may be added another general list, including those who have accepted the Christian faith after having been resolute advocates of an infidelity not unlike that which is now advertised as the New Religion, and successor of Christianity.

Count Brandt, Lord Littelton, Richard Cecil, Boyle, Bateman, Baron Haller, John Newton, and Bunyan.

The Dutch savants and the Scottish philosophers who belong to this class of foreign advocates of Christian doctrine, are numerous enough to furnish material for an additional chapter. But we must not go beyond the limits first proposed.

radicals, if one is disposed to make the distinction, coolly and sneeringly assert that all past testimony to the truth of Christianity, whatever be the source, is not, by them, to be entertained for a moment?

We do not wonder that such unparalleled boldness and presumption have, for the time, bewildered the friends of truth, and left them with nothing to say in reply.

But despite this, the witnesses still remain. Their voices are yet heard.

Downright assertion and negation have power to dazzle and blind but for a moment; after that, the eye regains its power, and looks with new delight upon the nearly twenty centuries which, in their solemn train, "have brought offerings, myrrh, frankincense, and gold, ay, and affections, tears, and worship, to the shrine" of the Lord Christ; and modern Christian souls, in the sympathy of this common divine life, whatever may have been "the varying chimes of theological bells," unite with all the past, and there is heard rising high above all the tumults of modern contention the same hymn east and west, first and last: "Blessing, and glory, and honor, and power be unto him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever."

Since then this vast array and unanimity of testimony meet us as a simple fact, can it be ignored or set aside with a slur, especially by those who are the most poorly qualified to judge, and who, by their own confession, are utterly ignorant of Christian experience and Christian consciousness?

The only real question to be entertained is, therefore, whether or not this great body of Christians have based

their faith for eighteen centuries upon brain-born notions. Have all these strong intellects and noble hearts, all these honored divines, poets, orators, statesmen, and benefactors of mankind, thought that they believed in something, when in reality they believed in nothing? Have they been duped by a "Galilean carpenter and a dozen illiterate fisherman"? Is it possible that Christ is only a Buddha, an Odin, a reformer, a phantom God?

Are the supreme satisfaction and happiness experienced in Jesus Christ and him crucified only imaginary? Nay, when Christian people, in perfect confidence, have said, with the blind man, "Now I see," and have heard distinctly spoken within their hearts the words, "Go in peace," and "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and when all classes of Christians have felt Christ by the bedside in sickness and death, and have found him dear and near even in hovels dark and dingy, in wild forests, amid chilling frosts, in brilliant cities, amid burning sands, and found him everywhere imparting spiritual vigor to the soul, and making it radiant with imperishable hopes and immortal life, — has it been only a dream?

Then, that being the fact, Jesus was, of course, merely man. Joseph was his father. He had human nature like our own — nothing else. He is dead and buried; let him alone. But worse still! The charm of the gospel disappears. The whole story is an idle tale. Death-beds are henceforth surrounded, nay, buried, in deepest doubt and gloom. Human hope is gone; the way to heaven, if there be one, is lost. The world is an orphan. A pall of silence, with noth-

ing of relief, hangs forever over all that is most dear and sacred to human heart and thought. Doomed believer, you are yet in your sins!

Nor is this all. Christian faith is not, in this calamity, the only sufferer. Faith in humanity and in the boasted dignity of human nature is likewise crushed in this downfall of Christian belief.

If all these men, through all these ages, have only dreamed out so strangely their experience, then can any dependence be placed upon man's thought and opinion? Nay, man's nature is a falsehood. Trample upon it, offer it your abuse and insults. It has no manhood.

But reserve your grossest insults for the people of Christian lands; they are less worthy of respect than pagans. No pagan has been satisfied with his God-man. Christians, Christendom through, are satisfied, and ask no more. No longer talk of miracles. Here is something more inexplicable and incomprehensible than all miracles, fictitious or real, this strong, abiding, and intense belief in — *nothing*.

Deception respecting the records of Christ's life presented a picture black enough. But this, this deception of the quickened spiritual perceptions of the best and greatest men on earth, is startling, frightful, and appalling in the extreme.

We can henceforth rely upon nothing. Vice and virtue can nevermore be distinguished: men must doubt and deny everything. O, madness!

Let us escape from such a world, — or else — believe; then all our difficulties will disappear in the morning blush of an eternal faith in Christ our Lord and God.

XII.

CHRISTIANITY.

THE impression which a man makes upon the age in which he lives is a good test of his character and greatness.

A better one, however, is found in the institutions established by him, the reforms inaugurated, and the impression made through them upon subsequent ages.

This is the light in which Christianity must be regarded in its relation to its Founder.

This is not the place, however, to treat of the nature or philosophy of Christianity; the most that is now proposed has relation to the system as an historical fact.

That Jesus was the originator of Christianity is beyond dispute.* We can trace all the marked

* De Wette clearly states the relation between Christ and Christianity: "The person of Jesus, his life and death, and faith in him, form the centre of Christianity."

Bunsen indirectly confirms the above: "There are for me two undeniable miracles, the creation of the universe by God, and the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ."

"Does not Christianity trace to Jesus innumerable moral

movements and influences coming from it back to him more readily than we trace a sunbeam to its source in the sun.

The world had possessed ample time and opportunity to develop a universal religion, but poorly had the work been performed. Pagan creeds were outgrown. There was darkness everywhere. A crisis was looked for. Nations held their breath, as Nature does before some great movement in her domains

blessings," says Martineau, "and call us to reverence him for guidance in the intricacies of duty, for light in the chamber of grief, for power of endurance amid the struggles of suffering nature, and for prospects of attractive grandeur beyond the grave!"

Says Dr. Eliot, speaking of the words of Christ, "It is not only that the words are strong in themselves and in the spiritual truth conveyed, but that they are made personal to Christ himself, as the agent of their fulfilment. Separate them from him, the speaker, and they are altogether lost. They are not abstract propositions to be proved, but personal testimony to be believed. We may verify them by the spiritual experience of personal faith; but we cannot abstract them from Jesus himself, who first proved their truth, and gave it to us as the established law of life, without denying its veracity at the same time. The Christian system is the truth as it is in Jesus, not in abstract propositions. We cannot hold to it as Christian truth; or, at least, I cannot, when we have falsified him."

Lecky, in his History of Rationalism, confesses that "the great characteristic of Christianity, and the great moral proof of its divinity, is, that it has been the main source of the moral development of Europe; and that it has discharged this office not so much by the inculcation of a system of ethics, however pure, as by the assimilating and attractive influence of a perfect ideal."

takes place. *His* arrival was awaited, he came and his system was put on trial. The old order stopped, the new began, and the night became day, in which men began to work as became them.

Such is the claim; have facts made it good?

It should be constantly kept before the mind in this discussion, that Jesus was not merely the preacher or publisher of Christianity, but its author. It was a factor of his life. Himself was the glad tidings. It should likewise be remembered that by the term *Christianity* is meant more than some of its comprehensive morals, more than its sublime sentiments, rather the system, as a whole, including especially its marked characteristics, the incarnation and God-man, sacrifice and atonement, regeneration and new consciousness. These are what constitute its vital phases, and it is in them that is secured for it the guardianship of the world. This thought will bear testing.

Is it not true that, before Plato and since Plato, the idea of a perfect and real man, a true Prometheus, sinless and infinite, a contradiction and a fact, has been what has held the world as by fascination? Has not the cross of Christ always been the ordained rendezvous of Christianity? Has it not stood "amidst the lapse of ages, and the waste of worlds, a single and solitary monument" of grand and heroic triumphs? Has not death, for once, — *His* death, — inspired in human hearts the profoundest courage? Has not the peace and disinthralment of humanity been wrung, as a matter of fact, from the sweat, agony, and blood of Calvary?

There can be no doubt, upon impartial inquiry,

that in these fundamental doctrines connected with Christ has slumbered, as in some of the undeveloped resources of nature, an unexplained, unknown, but inexhaustible power.

Every religious reform since the Christian era has begun with a revival of the gospel doctrine of justification by faith, not in Christ as a teacher, nor as an example, but as an atonement. And it will be thus to the end of time. But for this element of its faith, the Christian system would be to-day as forceless among the masses of men as many opinions which are already worn out and forever cast aside.

In fine, should Christianity announce that Jesus is merely man, and that his life and death differ not in kind from those of any other man, then the church, and Christianity, as De Pressense forcibly represents, must lay themselves down by his mortal remains, and also die. For their life absolutely depends upon a divine Lord, a divine Saviour, and a vicarious atonement.

We repeat, then, that Christianity, as thus defined, — and no other definition can be admitted, or is at all adequate and consistent, — is the product of the announcements, together with the life and death of Jesus the Christ. And upon these grounds its triumphs and conquests, whatever they may be, are essentially his, and primarily his alone.

Christianity may thus be regarded as a kind of "fifth Gospel," as readable and reliable (why not?) as the other four. It certainly is not in advance of its author; its character is no better established, and its excellence is not greater. If its characteristics are grand and unparalleled, then likewise are his.

"Every religion fully represents its founder," and no religion rises higher than its founder. "No mortal ever worshipped a dead God, or erected a temple under a gibbet."

It is clear, then, that the historic progress and the present attitude of Christianity in the civilized world must enter as important elements into our estimation of the person and character of Jesus. If everything is at present adverse to the system which he inaugurated, it would matter much less what were his personal claims, the confessions of his disciples, or the beliefs of the fathers and their contemporaries. Even modern faith and admissions could, under such circumstances, hardly withstand the cold and keen taunts of infidelity.

But, on the other hand, if the world is still moved through agencies set at work by Jesus, or supernaturally continued by him; and if great and good men still adore him, no less now than did they of the fisherman's craft in Galilee; and if his system yet holds the determining sway among the thoughts, customs, and characters of men; nay, more, if he continues to fulfil all the anticipations of the race in its periods of search, realizing more and greater things than they ever dreamed or dared hope for, then new force and significance must be imparted to his character and life. All the "anticipations of an intellectual dynasty" that have been struggling for realization will seem to find their fulfilment in such a one. All the mute prophecies which had been in the hearts of men, and almost upon their lips, will, under such circumstances, and in presence of such a character,

break their silence, and be outspoken in his favor. If Christianity is really and grandly triumphant, then also will the light play backward, and bring to notice much which has been hitherto disregarded or misunderstood among men; while He who introduced the system so long symbolized, cannot fail to be regarded, even from Adam to the last man, as the Light of the world.

While seeking the exact historic relation and import of these questions, we must not shrink from looking upon the dark as well as the bright side of the picture.

We are compelled to admit, in the first place, that historically, the triumphs of Christianity have been far from continuous; and that now, after nearly two thousand years, matters are not altogether what the Christian could desire.

In the present strife for the mastery of the world to Christian or infidel ideas, none can fail to see that a current of doubt, deep, and dark, and threatening, is setting in upon the church. It has learning; it also has genius, and men of every character of belief, unbelief, and disbelief. There are infidels who are filled with a spirit of desperation. There are fierce and disorderly sceptics. There are German theistic, and atheistic commentators, and Germans both in Germany and America, who would throw off all the restraints of civil and religious authority — a lawless *mob!*

There are also to be seen the misty and mysterious faces of Carlyle and Emerson, which are thought by many to be turned against Christianity. There are gentlemen and scholars in all the various relations and professions of life who steadily oppose the church and

its belief. There are likewise bewildered friends, who, occupying some middle position of doubt, seem upon the point of breaking from the ancient faith, and moving on with those who are openly opposed to it.

This flood tide of error and scepticism seems, to not a few, to be rolling on with calm, yet resistless progress, as if confident of submerging ultimately the whole religious world.

Taking this exclusive view of the subject, the condition of Christianity appears somewhat deplorable. The conquest of the world, especially when so many pagans, as soon as enlightened, become atheists and pantheists instead of Christians, seems to many utterly improbable. Surrounded by this condition of things, it is possible that some of the friends of the system are looking into one another's faces as they meet, wondering, and inquiring if they must really give over the struggle. May we not, perhaps they say, admit that Christ was a very good man, without claiming for him supreme divinity? May it not be enough to say that Christ's kingdom will last for a time, and then, like all else, pass away? Are we sure we are right while maintaining the old views, and will not our mortification be much less, in case of final defeat, provided we concede extreme ground, and occupy, with our opponents, some middle position, and avoid, thereby, all controversy?

It is possible that some of our readers are well nigh discouraged, waver a little, and reply — Yes. Especially is this likely to be the case with those who have been deprived of their faith in the unquestioned conquests of Christianity by the assertions of sceptics,

which have been made with much assurance, that the triumphs of other religions, such as Buddhism, Islamism, the faiths of Odin and Zoroaster, have more than surpassed all the boasted triumphs of the Christian system, and that all together they must inevitably disappear under the grander advance of superior social culture, accurate scientific investigations, and higher civilizations. The confidence with which these assertions are sometimes made leaves, apparently, but the slightest hope of any possible different issue.

We do not hesitate to give due prominence to these considerations. We frankly acknowledge the facts. It is true that Christianity has seen, since its planting, many a winter, as well as summer; and it does appear strange, upon the supposition that it is what it professes to be, that it should have had a single dark day, whereas it has, first and last, seen many of them.

It was this fact which staggered Lord Herbert, and to this may be traced his infidelity, though he confessed, at last, that "Christianity is the best religion."

Thomas Paine, too, in giving his reasons why Christianity cannot be true, says, "If it had been divinely inspired, would it not, long before this time, have extended throughout the world?"

But, on the other hand, may there not be some reasons outside Christianity, reasons beyond its control even, which may account in part for its tardy movements among the nations of the earth? Has it not had elements to contend with which God himself has not overcome? Providence certainly allows of other weathers than sunshine. When the thing all men desire actually comes on earth, not all are satisfied. Some will oppose it. Such is human nature.

It is possible, too, that there are good reasons why heathen become atheists and pantheists, instead of Christians. Not until the faith, love, and disinterestedness of nominally Christian nations interpret Christianity, and furnish practical explanation suited to the teachings of missionaries, will their preaching be attended by any remarkable and deserved success. Success is always attained "where the heathen can see Christianity in the families of Christians." Pagans, like most unregenerate persons in civilized lands, find no fault with the doctrine of Christians, but with the conduct of its representatives.

Francis Newman has well expressed the thought, "While nations called Christian are only known to heathens as great conquerors, powerful enemies, sharp traders, often lax in morals, and apparently without religion, the fine theories of a Christian teacher would be as vain to convert a Mohammedan or Hindoo to Christianity, as the soundness of Seneca's moral treatises to convert me to Roman paganism. Christendom has to earn a new reputation before Christian precepts will be thought to stand in any essential or close relation with the mystical doctrine of Christianity."

More than this: may it not be true that even the Hindoo, who lives in the world of thought, who believes that the knowledge of Brahm is the highest end of life, who believes that every divine man must be a twice-born man, is nearer right than the European, who seems to say to the Hindoo, Man is made only to buy and sell, eat and drink, make money and die?

The reply of the American Indian chief to a mis-

sionary who was urging him to embrace Christianity is suggestive — almost thrilling. Straightening himself up, with a consciousness of superior rectitude, indignation quivering on his curled lip, and fire flashing from his eagle eye, he exclaimed, "Christian? — Christian lie! Christian cheat! Christian steal! drink! murder! rob me of my lands! Devil! I'll be no Christian!"

Yes, a "new dispensation in heathen lands to retrieve the lost reputation of Piety" is necessary, in order to commend Christian faith to pagan thought and heart; and no argument based upon its failure, under existing circumstances, is worthy a moment's consideration.*

In view of the facts in the case, it is not a matter of

* We say it with great reluctance, and only because the interests of truth seem to require it, but may not Christianity have also suffered in the hands of some of our missionaries, who have been but poorly qualified, by nature and discipline, for the work? In a little book, called The Modern Buddhist, translated by Mr. Alabaster, foreign minister in Siam, we constantly find such complaints as the following against the missionary, in his answers to perfectly honest doubts and questions: "*When I had said this, the missionary became angry, and, saying I was hard to teach, left me.*" The missionary replied, "*If any one spoke like this in European countries, he would be put in prison.*" The missionary answered, "'*It is waste of my time to converse with evil men, who will not be taught,*' *and so left me.*" Well does Farrar remark that "This, it need hardly be said, was not St. Paul's method, but the very reverse of it." We would not venture this reflection against any of our self-denying and noble Christian missionaries, had not some of their own number confessed as much, and still more.

surprise that so few pagans have accepted Christianity, but is it not quite an occasion of wonder that any, nay, that so many, have pronounced in its favor? *

But, it is replied, why has not the heathen world had this "new dispensation"? That it has not, is not that an objection to the system?

No! That every part of the habitable world is not full of unexceptionable and devoted Christians is no fault of Christianity. Men are not such in spite of Christianity. They are deniers, scoffers, and practical atheists, because they *will* be deniers, scoffers, and practical atheists. And — we speak it reverently — God, in opposition to their wills, cannot, or will not, make them otherwise. That men continue to be sinners is no more an objection to Christianity than it is an objection to Jehovah!

If certain of our readers are not satisfied with these facts and statements, and continue to doubt the efficacy and divine nature of Christianity, we can but ask that a final judgment be not speedily rendered. Time will tell — is telling. We heartily subscribe to Carlyle's test of things. "The best thing," he says, "in the long run, is the strong thing. Await the issue. In this great duel, Nature herself is umpire: the thing which is deepest rooted in nature, which we call truest, that thing will be found growing at last."

This brings us directly to the other consideration already alluded to, and which is perhaps equally productive of objection. The case is stated thus: "If we test systems by their success, Christianity is, as yet, a

* Appendix, T.

long distance from holding the first rank among the world's religions.

While showing, on the one hand, that this exception is not well taken, we would not, on the other, utter a single reflection against whatever has been achieved by either of the religions referred to.

The magnitude of some of their movements none can question. That was no sham, but a real victory, which Buddhism achieved in China. This religion found that country practically destitute of a God and a divine mediator. Its first step was to announce both. It declared the existence of an Invisible, divine and infinite. It taught the actual or possible manifestation of the Almighty in the form of an infant ruler. These ideas were caught up by the people as if they had been starving because destitute of them.

But observe: when a faith, recognizing a God and the duty of consecration to him, triumphs over materialism and practical atheism, it becomes not a foe to the Christian faith, but an indirect witness of its truth. These temporary triumphs of Buddhism are precisely as we would have them. Yet, if we read aright, the end comes. Soon a lame and blind man, as in the history of Roman mythology, will be elevated to the throne and declared to be God. Then will the people become disheartened, disgusted, and look for something better.

The startling conquests of Mohammed over the idolaters of India, over the fire-worshippers of Persia, the Greeks, the Visigoths, and the corrupted Christian nations also, indicate that truth was upon the side, not of the conquered, but of the conquerors.

We have already stated that the principle upon which those victorious soldiers acted was correct. "God," they said, "exists. Man is his minister, is his representative, to do his will on earth." How unfortunate, indeed, it had been for the principles of truth, had not those soldiers, contending for such ideas, been well nigh invincible against those who failed equally to recognize the truth of things!

The Manichæan religion, too, which spread so rapidly through Syria and Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, as far as Italy, Gaul, and Spain, borrowed the best thoughts of Magianism, Judaism, Buddhism, and much from Christianity.

Worship without an altar, the form of prayer, the adoration of Christ as a heavenly principle, temperance and virtue, practical Christianity, in fact, were its chief elements of success; and thus far it was a triumph of Christian ideas over those which were partially or thoroughly pagan.

And the primitive religion of Scandinavia had not been modified by Odin if his faith had been no better or no more Christian than the faith supplanted. Zoroaster, too, had not been a successful reformer had not his protestantism been a resolute protest against what was more anti-Christian, rather, perhaps, more unchristian, than his own views.

The grand triumphs of corrupted Christianity in the form of Roman Catholicism is likewise no harbinger of ill. In fine, all these systems combined threaten no disaster to the truth. Though apparently hostile, they are in fact distant allies. In all their conquests Christianity has more to hope than to fear.

But the treatment thus far has been chiefly negative. It is now time to inquire what has, in reality and directly, been accomplished by the Christian system.

It certainly had a feeble and inauspicious beginning. A manger, a babe, a young man, a small company of disciples, were, in a human point of view, about all.

And when Christianity started out for the conquest of the world, it had but a handful of men. Thirty years after the birth of Christ the entire church met in an upper chamber of an ordinary house, and did not fill it. This company of Christians owned not a single church edifice or synagogue anywhere in the world. "If they spoke their own language, it betrayed them by its mongrel dialect." "Hebetes," "stolidi," "fatui," "infausti," "athei," were the harsh names heaped upon them. Truly, as Novalis says, "the unpoetic exterior of Christianity seems only to be lent it."

At its advent it found a sad state of things on earth. Being misunderstood, and attacking the prejudices of men, it met furious opposition. It seemed left for a time to contend against a whole enraged world. In its essence it was what all men wanted; but its form, like that of the founder, was misinterpreted. It was bread, but thought to be a stone; it was fish, the true *ichthus*, but mistaken for a serpent; it was an egg in the hand of God, but was rejected as a scorpion. The heated and selfish interests of minds, consciences, and hearts appeared to be in blind strife, with their fury turned against it. The story of the persecutions is too long and familiar to allow repetition. "Men clothed in garments smeared with pitch, and then lighted up as living torches to add a horrid lustre to the festivities

of the emperor," illustrate the treatment its representatives received.*

But all this only added greater lustre to the new religion which could inspire such devotion. Cruelties of other forms only drew fresh life from the axe used against it. No satisfactory explanation of this continued life from repeated death has yet been given. Analogies settle nothing, and add confusion. "Men," says Carlyle, "never did believe idle songs, or risk their souls' life in analogies."

But this is not all. The grand and aggressive movements Christianity instituted can never be explained on natural grounds. It affected society in every direction. The same day on which the entire church had gathered in one room saw the addition of three thousand members. Thence its march — rather its flight — among the nations is marvellous and unparalleled.†

Its conquests were gained, not in barbarous terri-

* White, in The Eighteen Christian Centuries, gives the following account of the persecutions under Nero: "These, regardless of age, or condition, or sex, he destroyed by every means in his power. He threw young maidens into the amphitheatre, where the hungry tigers leaped out upon them; he exposed the aged professors of the gospel to fight in single combat with the trained murderers of the circus, called the Gladiators; and once, in ferocious mockery of human suffering, he enclosed whole Christian families in a coating of pitch and other inflammable materials, and, setting fire to the covering, pursued his sport all night by the light of these living flambeaux. Some of his actions it is impossible to name."

Yet the persecutions of Nero, in extent and virulence, can hardly compare with those of Decius and Diocletian.

† Appendix, U.

tories alone, but in classic lands also. Where Euclid and Aristotle had investigated science, where Demosthenes and Cicero had uttered their eloquence, where Solon and Lycurgus had imparted wisdom and law, where Homer and Virgil had sung, and where Sallust and Livy had recorded their histories, it was equally victorious.

And more than this; whatever its achievements have been, they are the result of its internal power and excellence, and in no way were they dependent upon external force. Force, whenever attempted, for its spread or defence, from the hapless stroke of Peter's sword in the garden to the present time, has resulted only unfortunately.

Independent of either the political, military, or civil arm has its grandest and most decisive advance been made.

It stood apart, as if instinctively, from every form of politics, Jewish and heathen.

Wherever the sword has prepared the way, it has refused to follow, or has followed only reluctantly. All mechanical means and civil contrivances, political movements and imperial influence, have advanced its interests not one step. "Not to the diadem of Constantine, the tiara of Gregory, the gorgeousness of Leo, nor the fagots of Torquemada," is it in the least beholden.*

* The latest and most reliable verdict is, that Constantine owed much more to Christianity than it did to him. It seems quite clear from De Pressensé and F. W. Farrar that it was the grand successes already achieved by Christianity which influenced the emperor to embrace it. The language of Farrar

"If the church had only been let alone, to work out her true results by her own vital force, Christianity would have been a hundred fold stronger than she is to-day."

Nay, in proportion to the simple preaching of Jesus Christ with apostolic method and spirit, unencumbered by human invention and contrivance, — the last method man's wisdom would have advised, — in that proportion, and in that proportion only, has Christianity always been successful, grand, and invincible.

is especially clear and satisfactory. "It was a divine providence," he says, "which ordained that not till after three centuries of unaided struggle, — victorious, not because of princes, but in spite of them, — when Diocletian had retired smitten with a vague disease, and Galerius, eaten of worms, had revoked his cruel edicts, and Maximin, terrified by famine and pestilence, had restored their plundered goods, and Licinius and Maxentius had perished miserably in prison or in battle, that the terrified world flung itself at the feet of the oppressed, and Christianity mounted the imperial throne. It did not succeed because Constantine became a Christian, but Constantine became a Christian because it had succeeded. Long before the battles of Adrianople or the Milvian Bridge, Christianity had carried the day. 'We are but of yesterday, said Tertullian, and we have filled all that belongs to you — the cities, the fortresses, the free towns, the very camps, the palace, the senate, the forum; we leave to you the temples only.'"

"Little, indeed, did Christianity owe to that trimming emperor and unbaptized catechumen, — that strange Christian indeed! — who placed his own bust on the statues of Apollo, who thought the nails of the true cross a fitting ornament for the bridle of his charger, on whose extraordinary figure the robes so besmeared with gold and crusted with jewels, could not conceal the Neronian stains of a son's and a consort's blood."

By such simple means against odds and obstacles, sometimes apparently overwhelming, the religion of of Christ — his representative, in fact — started forth, and gained, as we have seen, speedy conquests in all directions. Other religious oracles became silent.* Al-

* We hear the bitter complaints of Porphyry, that under the sound of the gospel, the Roman gods had grown dumb, and refused to repeat the oracles.

Milton describes the fact thus: —

"The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No trance or breathéd spell
Inspired the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

"The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring and dale,
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thicket mourn.

"In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint:
In urns and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted seat."

tars that had been thronged were deserted. The great Jupiter, the brilliant Apollo, the great forger of thunderbolts, and the daring ruler of the sea, were stricken as if by fatal paralysis. Heathen philosophers became Christian bishops.* Heathen priests gave place to Christian presbyters. Christian orators preached Christ where heathen orators had advocated the claims of state and client.

The Jewish theocracy, though "festooned with the garlands of centuries," struggled in vain against the mighty child born in its midst. Gross and earth-bound materialists, even, were everywhere loosened from their original hold, and lifted towards heaven.

The providence of God seemed to wake up and work manfully in favor of the new system, whether it were true or false. The kingdom of Christ is, in fact, historically the kingdom of God. The course of events has been bearing as strong testimony for Jesus as did his chosen disciples.

The storms which rocked Rome nursed Christianity into greatness. The wars of Carthage, the victories of Hannibal, the triumphs of Scipio, Paulus, Marius, Sylla, Pompey, and Cæsar, the fall of Greece and Syria, Egypt, Spain, Gaul, and Britain, appear to have taken place with special reference to the new religion,† and that, too, in its favor.

Nature, likewise, has been Christ's priest, and all her

* "The friends of Christianity," says Gibbon, "may acknowledge without a blush, that many of the most eminent saints had been, before their baptism, the most abandoned sinners."

† Birks.

forces are his forces. Science, too, is an ally. How often it is repeated, and correctly, that lightnings in the sky or on the wire, and steam on land or sea, have pledged their support and effort! Christendom, from first to last, and almost in every point of view, is a standing miracle.

Are facts demanded to substantiate these various statements? They are at hand.

Christianity in less than a century entered Syria, Libya, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Parthia, the whole of Asia Minor, and no small part of Europe.

Three centuries had not passed away before Christians were enabled to say to pagans, "We fill your cities, your armies, — we are everywhere."

In four centuries it had pervaded the civilized world; it sat upon the throne of the Cæsars; it had spread beyond the limits of Rome's political influence, had made inroads upon barbarian nations whom her eagles had never visited, had taken captive the northern hordes which poured down from the Alps to conquer the worn-out civilization of the empire, and "had gathered all genius and learning into itself, and made the literature of the world its own."

Before six centuries had gone by, it entered the savage forests of Germany and the farther north, traversed gloomy hills, and still more gloomy valleys, converted the warriors of Odin into Christian missionaries, found its way into Britain and Ireland, demolished their bloody altars, thrilled their oak groves with songs of praise and peace, everywhere taming wild nations, and converting to its faith the world's conquerors.

"Kings, when their day of toil was over, laid down crown and sword, and retired into cloisters, to pass what remained of life in prayers and meditations on eternity. The supreme object of reverence was no longer the hero of the battle-field, but the barefoot missionary, who was carrying the gospel among the tribes that were still untaught. So beautiful in their conception of him was the character of one of these wandering priests, that their stories formed a new mythology." *

Christianity has often, since those early times, it is true, had to contest its advance step by step, almost inch by inch. It has withstood much at many points. It withstood the attempted eclectic revival of paganism, which imported to Rome the mysteries, the worship, rituals, and rites of all known religions, clothing them with every possible fascination; but all to no purpose. Combined they were no match or equivalent.

It survived a second age of barbarism. It survived an age when "kings warred to the death with popes," and "popes struggled to put their feet upon the necks of kings."

It survived an age worse than barbarism, when Christendom was no longer Christian, when priests were atheists, and laughed at their own services, as the heathen priests, more than a thousand years before, had trifled during their most solemn rites.

It survived the revival of a literature worse than heathen,† and an age when popes speculated upon the financial profitableness of the fable of Jesus Christ,

* Froude.

† For evidence, see the writings of Della Casa, Bandello, Bibbiena, Pomponatus, and Poggio.

and led lives too abandoned for history faithfully to record.*

It survived the period of reaction, and the break-up of beliefs which was inaugurated by the "vindictive thunder of Martin Luther," but which resulted in the license of personal judgment. That age of "the trifling head and the corrupted heart," represented in England by Hobbes, in Holland by Spinoza, in France by Bayle, tested Christianity at well nigh every point. It was indeed a dark hour.

"I beheld religion," says Cave, in his Primitive Christianity, "generally laid waste, and Christianity ready to draw its last breath, stifled and oppressed with the vice and impiety of a debauched and profligate age."

But the Christian system, as if clad in the splendid form and power of truth, emerged from that sea of darkness, and crowned again the hills and graced the valleys of the world with its cheerful and marvellous light.†

It flourished after the restoration of letters had been fully completed. And in that country, especially, where

* The character and practices of Clement V. and Boniface VIII., Urban VI., John XXIII., Leo X., Alexander VI., Sextus IV., and Innocent VIII., furnish sufficient evidence of the above statement.

† How suggestive is the remark of Goethe in this connection! —

"The greatest honor is due to Christianity, for continually proving its pure and noble origin by coming forth again, after the great aberrations into which human perversity has led it, more speedily than was expected, with its primitive special charm . . . for the relief of human exigency."

literature ripened almost to perfection, it exerted its most marked and controlling influence, commanding universal respect, and everywhere faithfully responding to the new or revived tests rigidly applied to it by scepticism.

It also promptly met objection and argument of every sort whenever presented.

From the sixteenth century to the most recent times, it has firmly maintained its sharply-contested ground in all the various fields of argument and criticism.

Scientific giants have often hurled their mountains to crush it. Materialists, pantheists, atheists, French encyclopædists, and rabble crowds of outlawed communists, have, at times, united their efforts to whelm it. But by the majesty of its inherent power, supernatural or natural, — *all the more supernatural if natural*, — it has met their assaults; nor by them has it been harmed in the least. All single or combined oppositions have but reacted against the authors of them. All that sceptics have accomplished since Christ came has not shaken or disturbed one single truth of Christianity as originally set forth by Jesus and his disciples.

David Hume, while doubtless congratulating himself upon the results of his personal efforts, confidently predicted the downfall of Christianity in the nineteenth century.

Voltaire asserted, with great self-assurance, that though it had taken twelve men to plant Christianity, his single arm should root it out.

Thomas Paine boasted, in his coarse way, that he had cut down every tree in the garden of Paradise.

And Mr. Parker publicly declared that he would traverse New England in all directions, that his voice should be heard in city and village, and that unless there were something more in the popular theology than he dreamed of (the qualification was well put), he would demolish it, even to its foundations.*

How often human strength betrays its consummate weakness! Of what avail have been the puny hands of these men, stretched forth so resolutely for the purpose of arresting the progress of Christian faith? What have they accomplished? They might as well have contended, seemingly, against the advancement of the human race, or against the majestic providence of God.

There are some things which cannot be arrested or resisted, and do not facts show that Christianity is among the number?

Whenever the new or revived theories of distinguished sceptics and infidels have been first published, they have appeared to be in a fair way of achieving much for the cause of error, and threatening indeed has been their aspect towards Christianity. But the results in every case have been strikingly uniform. They have glared for a time, then glimmered, and then, at length, have disappeared in the surrounding darkness.

"Does not the history of all literature prove that

* These threats remind us of the early centuries, when Diocletian and Galerius, thinking the last day of Christianity had come, symbolized it on their medals as a strangled hydra, with the haughty inscription, "Deleta Christiana religione" — *The Christian religion is destroyed!*

not even the brightest wit or the keenest genius, not even the stately eloquence of Bolingbroke, or the universal learning of Diderot, or the glowing imagination of Byron, or the flashing witticisms of Voltaire, can save the writings of men, however gifted, from perishing of inevitable decay," if they are employed either against Christianity or its Author?

The objections of such men as Celsus, Porphyry, Woolston, Voltaire, and Paine are no longer repeated by persons of refinement or intelligence.

Hagenbach aptly characterizes this ridicule, once so dreaded by the friends of truth, as a school-boy's effort to excite "the cheap laughter of his associates by painting a mustache on some fine antique."

The mythicism of Strauss, once eagerly accepted, is now discarded, especially in his own country.

The Tübingen school, once so popular, is no more. The same may be said, with almost equal emphasis, of the rationalism of Paulus, the naturalism of other schools, and the legendary dreams of Renan. What next?

But the Christian system has done more than merely to act upon the defensive. It has likewise, by reason of its progressive character, commanded the respect, if not the assent, of the greatest and best minds of all civilized lands. So important is it to the national and individual weal, that even those who reject the theory of its divine origin are convinced that the world cannot do without it.*

* "While we enjoy the liberty [of thought and of science] as sons of God," says Renan, "let us beware of contributing to that weakening of virtue which would threaten society if

It certainly cannot be denied that it has provided laws, customs, and morals for the great mass of the civilized world. Its symbol of salvation is everywhere recognized, revered, and loved.*

Christianity is to-day enlarging the fields of general

the force of Christianity should be enfeebled. What should we be without it? Who shall replace such schools of seriousness and reverence as the St. Sulpice? such a ministry of self-abnegation as that of the Sisters of Charity? How can we avoid being terrified at that aridness of emotion and frivolity of aim which are at present overrunning the world?" And again: "If Rationalism insists on governing the world without providing for the religious wants of man, the experience of the French revolution interposes to warn us against the consequences of an error so fatal."

* "Nothing more signally illustrates the exterior triumph and historical success of the gospel," says an able Unitarian, "than that reverend symbol, the cross, which — once abhorred and accursed, an instrument of torture, a sign of guilt, and an emblem of shame — has become a glory, and a grace, and an idol of the world. Once forbidden within the fold of civil walls, and approached with horror and trembling through the 'execrable gates' of cities, it has come to flaunt on regal brows; it crowns the solemn temple; it flames in the battle's van; it glitters on beauty's breast; it is curiously carved in wood and stone; it is framed of jewels and gold. In the centre of the Flavian amphitheatre in Rome, once the stronghold of polytheism, it occupies the ground where the followers of the Crucified were thrown to the lions, or transfixed with the sword. All who behold it revere and bless it."

"Whatsoe'er
The form of building, or the creed professed,
The cross, bold type of shame, to homage turned,
Of an unfinished life that sways the world,
Shall tower as sovereign emblem over all."

intelligence, exercising controlling influence in all the relations of life, and — say what opponents may to the contrary — it furnishes the foundation for the most firmly-established, striking, and benignant movements of modern times.

Its present position among the nations is stronger evidence of its divinity than any which was possessed by the apostles, granting that everything reported was literally true.

Christianity is found everywhere, not in hyperbole, but as fact. Each returning Sabbath, the sound of church bells, beginning in the far East, is heard, between sun and sun, going round the globe.

The world is advancing slowly, but surely and grandly; and it is not extravagant to say that in this advance Christianity is, at every stage, more and more recognized as the significant, the culminating, dominant and all-determining fact of modern times.

In this respect, the plummet is to be yet discovered which can sound the profound abyss which yawns between Christianity and all other religions. "There is between Christianity and whatever other religions you please," says Napoleon, in one of his keen and comprehensive sentences, "the distance of infinity." *

The present as well as the historic attitude of Christianity enables us likewise to speak prophetically. "The Christian religion, once here," says Carlyle, "cannot pass away." It is of such a character, in other words, that there is no possible death for it, but rather perpetual life, while the world stands.

* Appendix, V.

We believe, with progressive men of every class, that the future is stored with grand events and discoveries; but we just as confidently believe that they will shed all their light upon Christianity, disclosing more and more its transcendent claims and superiority.* When, therefore, reformers (?) talk of a progress and a civilization, and of certain undefined "living inspirations," which are soon to supersede the "old theologies," the "creeds outgrown" and "century-mossed systems" of Christian faith, we are indignant at one moment, but smile the next.

"If the race has outgrown Christianity," says Bayne, "let it solemnly put it away; but the dignity of humanity requires that it be not shuffled aside."

In the name of humanity, we have an unquestioned right to demand clearness on such a subject. But as yet has anything been furnished us save evasion and vagaries?

It is certainly not impertinent in us to demand reasons for deserting the established faith. But as yet has an adequate, or scarcely intelligent, or even intelligible reason been assigned?

When opinions which have been held sacred for a thousand years are attacked, is not the attacking party to be the laboring party until at least the outer intrenchments have been demolished?

* The world can see to-day as never before what a misfortune to historic Christianity has been every attempt to stifle free inquiry. All investigations, be they in the fields of philosophy, natural or philological science, or any other, have but gathered corroborating data, which, after a little time, have been laid, reluctantly or willingly, at the foot of the cross.

But has the attacking party, in the case in question, done anything except merely to intrench themselves in some indefinite and distant negations, and then to assert that the victory is won, and that Christianity is dead?

We beg pardon, but, if we are not mistaken, the world is not yet sufficiently advanced to fully appreciate the very singular attitude of most of those who have of late attempted to "shuffle aside" and "hush up" the grand truths of our religious faith.

There has been quite too much of this fine talk, and it has been talked by far too many years, and too little good fruit has come of it, for men to surrender the "old system" in favor of the wise notions of these teachers and writers, who, by implication, claim to be so far in advance of all others.

The meaning of assumption and presumption, — has it been known until of late?

We speak the mind of the Christian church, when we say to all these "advanced thinkers," so called, that Christianity is not in the least alarmed. "The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky, but the stars are there, and will reappear."

The reader of history has seen so much of this straw-burning enterprise, first and last, that it has come to be to him a sort of pastime. Fires made up of such materials do not last, only as constantly renewed.

Ecclesiastical history tells us, as we have already seen, that when Christianity was in its infancy, men from the East, subtle and metaphysical, men from Africa, strong-minded and philosophical, together

with imaginative Greeks, practical Romans, and zealous Jews, endeavored to smother the system; but it likewise informs us that they signally failed in their efforts. And it also tells us, in the sequel, to fear not the efforts of less able opponents, especially now that Christianity is in its vigorous manhood.

We have every reason to believe that Philo, who was well provided with "shafts of profane wit;" that Porphyry, who abounded in sophistry, and who was rich in stores of learning, though thoroughly materialistic; and Hierocles, who was an artist of remarkable inventive resources, and whose talents were consecrated to a pagan imitation of Christian truth, — were just as able opponents of Christianity as the ablest of these men whom the nineteenth century has produced.

The outcome is inevitable, and will show that weaker men relatively will not succeed, where stronger men have always failed.

But there are other considerations than those growing out of history which inspire confidence in the permanency of Christianity. There are certain immutable elements in Christian faith, as there are in nature, which never have changed, and never can change, and which will never outgrow the passions and loves of the human soul. The beauty of a mild sunset, the sublimity of a midnight heaven, the dazzle of lightnings playing across the sky, the repose and beauty of a lily clad in raiment surpassing that of any present or future Solomon in all his glory, will not be outgrown, though society should exist in a state of constant progress for ten thousand years.

The beautiful, true, and good are no older to-day than in Plato's time; they are eternal, and fade not. The complexion of eternal and essential things never changes, and their youth is never lost.

It is in harmony with this principle, that any mind truly philosophical can confidently assert that a system so thoroughly adapted to mankind as is Christianity; a system which stands out as a kind of "spiritual highland" and headland for the human race; a system which, the more it is studied and experienced, is the more highly prized, whose path is always the path of peace, knowledge, elevation, emancipation, and salvation; a system "various in manner, profoundly in harmony with the elementary conscience of the world; flexible in its circumstantials, while most inflexible in its essence; full of strength for the weak, of consolation for the sorrowful, of hope for the discouraged, of stimulus for the sluggish, of support for just authority, of defence for the defenceless, of authority for the many, of terror for the bad, of reward for the good, of pardon for the penitent;" a system which can satisfy all the desires that philosophy or human want awaken, which can enter all dark places and leave them full of light by conquering despair and instituting its wonderful miracles of renovation; a system that can convert dens of thieves into bethels of the Holy Ghost, and which can cast out its legion of devils, and say to crime-stained wretches, whose brains have been in a perpetual "craze," and whose hearts have been "filled with all sorts of villanies," "Peace, be still;" a system which can stand by the bedside of the dying, quell every misgiving, wipe away the death

sweat, and leave the brow calm and serene as heaven, — yes, a system which can perfect the individual, bless the family, correct and purify society, and civilize the world; which can, in fine, do everything it promises to do, and promises to do everything essential to human happiness, here and hereafter, — such a system has the unencumbered guarantee of all times. Its foundations are impregnable. Its fortified home is in the wants and depths of human souls. And human nature, in its better moments and conditions, will support and endow it, even with her last dollar and her last strength.

Christianity is not, therefore, a "cherished prejudice of past ages." It stands not in the breath of a given generation. It is independent of accidents, incidents, coincidents, anything, indeed, historic, artificial, and transitory. It will witness the consummation of human history and the end of earthly dispensations. It may be obscured for a moment, but extinguished never. It may pause for an hour in its advance, but not from exhaustion.

Nothing in the universe, save the perversity, sovereignty, and doubt of human hearts, with which it has to deal and contend, is able to prevent *for a single day* a conquest final and universal. But this even does not affect its ultimate security and success.

They are independent of man's perversity. Its unassailable bulwarks are also in the power and providence of God. It lives, and always has lived, in the divine favor. Had it been otherwise, it had been bound to the stake with the early martyrs, expired in their ashes, and "had been intombed in the sep-

ulchre of her first and last apostles." But "all true work, hang the author of it on what gibbet you like, must and will accomplish itself." Christianity is a "true work;" nothing is truer. The immutable laws of God conspire in its favor. The hot tramp of all mighty results is but increasing its visible protections, and announce that this system is original, eternal, absolute and final.*

* It is easy to substantiate the strong statements here made, not from the "rhetorical flourishes of young orthodox divines," but both from outsiders and from opposers in their better moments and clearer sight.

"The Christian religion once here," says Carlyle, "cannot pass away; in one or the other form it will endure through all time; as in Scripture, so also in the heart of man is written, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Were the memory of this faith never so obscured, — as, indeed, in all times the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do all but obliterate it in the hearts of most, — yet in every pure soul, in every poet and wise man, it finds a new missionary, a new martyr, till the great volume of universal history is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this earth. It is a height to which the human species were fated and enabled to attain, and from which, having once attained it, they can never retrograde."

Mr. Parker, speaking of Christianity as Christ announced it, says, "Its lofty summit far transcends the tumult, knows nothing of the storm which roars below, but burns with rosy light at evening and at morn, gleams in the splendors of the midday sun, sees his light when the long shadows creep over plain and moorland, and all night long has its head in the heavens, and is visited by troops of stars which never set, nor veil their face to aught so pure and high."

"Some think," said Coquerel while in America, "that progress shall eventually destroy and replace Christianity.

Such is the Christian religion. Its history, nature, and security are decisive. Men do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles. The definite source of this grand system of truth is the soul of that unlettered mechanic (?) from a despised quarter of a despised land.

If any question in science or metaphysics demands patient investigation and answer, is it not the one long ago asked, intensely emphatic then, still more so now — "Whence hath this man these things?"

We change slightly the form of the question, retaining the spirit, and adapting it to modern thought. If the mind of God, with no mental force left out, had really constituted the personal identity of Christ Jesus, and if God had desired to leave to the world a monument of that fact which would be both suitable and sublime, could he have devised anything, in the unprejudiced and enlightened judgment of men, more satisfactory than the Christian faith and the Christian religion?

This is a deep error, has great consequences, and we in every country have suffered greatly from that ignorance."

"Let the human mind be expanded as much as it please," says Goethe, "it will never transcend the height and morality of Christianity as it shines in the gospel."

VIII.

EPILOGUE.

IT is Shakespeare, if we mistake not, who makes one of the conditions of a good drama that it need no epilogue. Perhaps the principle applies to all subjects. If so, a faultless treatment of *the divine theme* will never be accomplished. Every writer venturing to treat it will need his epilogue — a sort of indirect apology, an effort in a few concluding words to concentrate, as in a lens, the otherwise scattered rays, and from the various sources bring them to bear directly upon some single point of the all-comprehensive subject.

Were it in one's power to do more than this, — even to bring to view and into clear light a perfect portrait of our Lord, having for its background the desires of humanity, their search, their attempts to realize the ideal, also the historic accounts, together with the opinions and convictions of eighteen hundred years, — no other or greater blessedness could be asked.

On the other hand, for one to profess to have done this would be but to do the greatest possible violence

to that instinctive feeling in the heart of every true believer, which tells him that all human words and representations are only relative and finite, while any phase of the life and character of Jesus the Christ has connections which are absolute and infinite.

Well did the great painter, Leonardo da Vinci, when he had placed on the canvas, in his painting of the Last Supper, the portraits of the Twelve, pause before that of the Master, nor scarcely venture a stroke of his skilful pencil.

How admirable, too, the sense of propriety in that finished artist, Albert Durer, who, in his painting of the Man of Sorrows, represented the head as turned away, thus hiding a face he felt he could not delineate!

How faultless, likewise, especially in a purely rhetorical light, and more especially to an Oriental mind, the epilogue of St. John's Gospel!

This apostle, be it remembered, had the grandest, even the most august conception possible of the magnitude of Christ's life and deeds. When, therefore, he desired to express the fact that the gospel records contained but a few scattered leaves of that great biography, which, in its more important relations, is infinite, was not the language not only allowable under the circumstances, but also elegant and graceful, if not verily indispensable, even in an inspired writer, when saying, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain [comprehend] the books that should be written. Amen."

Without attempting more than did Durer, and con-

fessing with the apostle that but a trifle of the whole has been said, we may seek at least to deepen a few impressions already familiar to all.

Jesus of Nazareth is a Teacher. We say *is*, rather than *was*, because he is more of a teacher to-day than ever before.

Granting that he was the Christ of God, — which must be allowed in order to keep truth upon his side, and also to save his teachings, from being stigmatized as essentially defective, — then he was the most remarkable teacher that has ever appeared among men.

No other has been so revolutionary as he. His professed design was to transform the individual, the family, and society; * and this, too, at a time and among a people when the inauguration of change meant death.

This Jewish people were intrenched in a long and splendid national history, which included the adventures of Abraham, when he abandoned the gods of his fathers in Ur of the Chaldees, also the era of patriarchs, the deliverance under Moses, the times when Joshua, with uplifted spear, bade the sun stand still, the conquests of David, the grandeur of the reign of Solomon, the splendid priesthood of Samuel, and the sublime triumphs of Elijah, likewise much else that filled the national heart with patriotic pride. For one to deviate in the least from any of these facts or traditions, was revolutionary or blasphemous, and was punishable with death.

When that obscure youth, in the face of all this array of historic prestige, inaugurates publicly a wholesale modification, nay, when he strikes blow after blow

* Matt. x. 34–36.

directly into the heart of things held by all as revered and sacred, must we not regard him as the very embodiment of revolution and rebellion? Should we longer wonder that he so frequently threw the utmost confusion and consternation in among the great teachers of his nation? The boldness of his policy, and the terror of his denunciations against civil and religious magistrates, do they find anywhere in history a parallel?

Yet his proposed changes meant, not anarchy or moral license, but always reform and purity. He sought the weal, not the woe, of society. There is nowhere the slightest laxity in morals, or any departure from the highest civil obligations. Cæsar's requirements were faithfully discharged by him. He did not allow that an impure thought could be cherished without sin. An aimless word must not be spoken. He enjoined upon all men nothing short of heroic truthfulness and entire consecration to virtue and to God.

And he arrayed moral and religious laws into such new and marvellous combinations, that men who had gone to sleep under formalities, finding themselves suddenly shaken by the arm, woke up, and looked upon a new sunrise in a new world. He surprised and astonished men at every turn. Nay, more; do not his ideas and expressions continue to thrill with supreme admiration us even, upon whom the ends of the earth, with all their culture and refinement, have come?

And what is no less remarkable, Jesus appears at all times to hold much more in reserve than is expressed. The most august composure which cannot exist without conscious strength unexpended, almost

untried, seemed ever to attend him. This certainly is quite unlike the elation and inordinate excitement which always characterize those who are thronged by such diverse crowds of people. He was as composed before vast multitudes of all classes, and even when confronting the passions of angry men, as if "twelve legion of angels" awaited his command.

Upon strictly rhetorical grounds it may also be said that the eloquence of suspended or reserve power, both in word and action, has never found such illustration as with Jesus. He had many things to say to his disciples, but was often silent. He forbade his friends to disclose the miracles wrought.* He always waited for the moment of inevitable and irresistible conviction to come. He delayed until the nation was aroused, and Jerusalem crowded, and then, in that moment of tremendous climax, he made his public announcement, and told Pilate who he was.

Again, Jesus, as a teacher, was not modest, as the term is employed among men, nor yet vain.

Moses, Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, and even Mohammed were modest; they put themselves in the background; never represented themselves as perfect examples, and spoke, upon personal admission, the words of others, not their own.†

We may safely say that it is usually the case that

* Matt. ix. 30, xii. 16, xvi. 20, xvii. 9; Mark iii. 2, viii. 30, ix. 9; Luke ix. 21.

† The modesty of Confucius is characteristic of this class of men. "The sage," he says, "and the man of perfect virtue — how dare I rank myself with them? The character of a perfect man, carrying out in his conduct what he professes, is what I have not yet attained to."

those minds which have influenced public thought most, throughout history, have confessed much less for themselves than their modern admirers have confessed for them. They always wavered in uncertainty, and were ever desiring some absolute and authentic revelation, which they confessed they could not discover.

But Jesus never acknowledged ignorance; he had no misgivings, was never embarrassed, or offered apology. He was bold, original, and independent; and in that memorable sentence, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, . . . but I say unto you," several times repeated and emphasized, he arrayed himself against the whole world.

And yet, on that occasion, even, there is not left upon the mind of any unprejudiced person the least impression or thought of vanity in Jesus. The language is unobjectionable — may we not say it? — only because from his lips. Notwithstanding he was thus fearless of nothing, and though his attention was often called suddenly, and, in a human point of view, unexpectedly, to consider the most difficult and perplexing matters, yet he was always equal to the emergency, nor was he ever coarse or trivial.

His wisdom was sufficiently deep, his insight sufficiently penetrating, his courage sufficiently daring, his tenderness sufficiently winning, to enable him to give an absolutely faultless answer to the question propounded.

He possessed such severity when deserved, so great pity when in presence of human evil, want, and sorrow, such plainness and delicacy, grandeur and gentleness, such love, patience, purity, perfection, and majesty,

and all these qualities were so admirably blended, that the world has long since ceased to look for their like.

It is no longer doubted, except by a few eccentric persons, that Jesus was absolute master of all occasions, and of all circumstances. He was ready upon any topic, and prepared at a moment's warning, to command to his assistance the vine trailing along the lattice, or the lightning playing in the sky; men at their ordinary occupations in the city, and in the field, came at his bidding to do him service; in fine, gold and stubble, silks and rubbish, under his mastership, possessed about equal value; and the value of each, when he touched it, rose beyond estimate.

The falling of a sparrow and the clothing of a lily are henceforth sacred. He alone, of all teachers, knew the exact meaning of nature's symbols, and he alone could uniformly employ them in faultless propriety. He converted the most ordinary prose, even that which men had cast aside as threadbare, into the most charming, graceful, and wonderful poetry. He employed no figure of speech, even on the spur of the moment, which could offend the most fastidious taste. He never employed a useless word, and never, in all his life, was betrayed into trivial disputations.

And though he discoursed upon the profoundest themes which have ever engaged men's thought, it should also be observed that he adapted every expression to all classes.

Consider this thought for a moment. He taught more and better religious truth during a ministry of three years, than all who had preceded him; so exhaustive was he in the treatment of his subjects, that

the world's morality and theology no longer constitute progressive sciences; men are henceforth to expound and modify existing formula, but can advance not one step beyond the revelations he made.

It is a dictate of philosophy, too, that "all the ways of culture and greatness lead to solitary imprisonment." How securely imprisoned, then, must Jesus have been! But for some reason, himself and his words are within the reach of all who listen. Listening and possessing a willing heart are the only conditions; to those who fulfil these, Jesus is the most social being that has walked the earth.

He was, and is, at every such man's fireside, speaking to him the voice of ages; he is instantly understood, because himself is what he says; he is none other than *Very Word*. Such was his convincing and mighty way of talking to men! His eloquence, — almost the only example of native eloquence the world has seen, — though eminently persuasive and thrilling, was never rhetorical or emotional. He spoke: the world is listening to-day, because his sentiments were the embodiment of sublime simplicity, full of charm and power, and as free from vagaries and abstractions, scholasticism and technicalities, as the blush of June, or the golden drapery of an October morning, —

> "Which they may read who bind the sheaf,
> Or build the house, or dig the grave,
> Or those wild eyes which watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef."

But it is still more remarkable that Jesus seldom reasoned — in the strict sense, perhaps never. It was

with him yea, yea, and nay, nay, respecting those great truths upon which there had been among men the profoundest reasoning.

Human obligations, the soul's immortality, the resurrection from the dead, the final judgment, heaven and hell, were truths announced by him, but were never reasoned upon, or argued, as Socrates would have argued them. Jesus was always imperative; Socrates never was. "Therefore" was not usually with him the conclusion of a syllogism, but the introduction of a revelation.

And yet Jesus was never in doubt. Nor is it singular, upon second thought, that these two elements should be combined. A man reasons when in doubt; reasons that, step by step, he may reach correct conclusions. Jesus *knew;* his ideas of those grand subjects, and of all others, were pure and perfect; he had seen — therefore a process of reasoning would, in his own mind, be out of place.

It is in harmony with this, that he propounded no systems and no theories — he announced. This positiveness, however, was not presumption. Men, it is true, cannot test by any mathematical rule all he said, because much of it is beyond their reach. But so far as humanity can go, he never contradicts its better judgment.

He is acknowledged, for instance, to be the world's only absolutely correct master of moral principles, without the slightest admixture of error. He can, likewise, be authenticated in other fields. He announced, as all admit, sharper and profounder judgments respecting the ordinary affairs of this world,

than all teachers who had preceded him; his successors have been but repeaters.

Other teachers had talked about light, and sought it. Jesus brought it. They guessed, often guessed well. He settled their questions by assertion, and converted their negatives into positives.

They taught after investigation, he by inspiration. They were disputers, he was a revealer. His words are so positive, and appeal so directly to the conscience, almost to the consciousness of men, that they appear like God's revelations to human hearts. The truths he uttered appear like emanations from infinite wisdom and truth. They disclose what is in God's mind. Every charming landscape, God's handwriting, seems of the kindred of Jesus. No wonder that the most beautiful objects in nature fell from his lips so gracefully; they could not help it. He and they are equally expressions of the infinite; the one a revelation in nature, the other a revelation in "the flesh." Yet he is more. Nature always yields to his presence. She is another John the Baptist. She stoops before him, and then hesitates even to loosen his shoe-latchets, saying, "This was he of whom I spake; he that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me."

"Jesus taught," as Butler says, "with a degree of light to which that of nature is darkness." *Lux post nubila.* Such is God's method. Shadows do not last. *Light after shadows.* "Must not every thinking man," as John Locke remarks, "conclude respecting Jesus, with Nicodemus, We know that thou art a teacher come from God?"

Nay, more; if God had literally been in Christ, can we imagine that he would have announced to the world more than he did?*

Jesus is an Example. But we need, at this point, the same qualification as that before stated. His example, if he were merely human, is defective. He is an example incidentally, not essentially. His essen-

* It is a fair question to ask, though this is not the place to fully discuss it, How did Jesus come in possession of all this wisdom?

Not by borrowing. Even Renan confesses that Jesus "did not even know the name of Buddha, Zoroaster, or Plato; he had read no Greek book, no Buddhist soutra."

Not by being taught. He was neither self-taught, employing the term technically, nor trained in any school.

Not because he owed anything to his condition in life. He was what he was in spite of his humble family, in spite of the obscure province in which he was born, and in spite of the despised nationality to which he belonged.

It is poetic to say that it had been less fortunate for Jesus to have been born in the house of a Roman senator. Such statements are poetry, not fact, save that the prophecies had not then been fulfilled. His character and teachings clearly show that he would have been an exceptional being anywhere, in any age, and that certainly outward favor could not have hindered him.

It is also said that "civilization is debtor to lowly cradles," and that "unknown mothers hold a heavy account against the world." This is true, beyond question. But it is far from true that the unparalleled greatness of Jesus depended upon his cradle, or his mother. It was Plato who said, "We shall never have perfect men until we surround them with perfect circumstances." There is truth in this, as well as in the opposite expressions. Yet poor, rude, and illiterate were they of Christ's native village; and he was a mechanic. In fine, his teachings, and the outward condition of his life, are absolutely and forever irreconcilable.

tial life work was the redemption of the race, not by the example of his life, but by his death. This admitted, he appears no less remarkable as an example than as a teacher. In that brief period of three years of middle life, he has given data sufficient to form rules for the government of all times, all ages, and all affairs of men.

No element belonging to the nobility of human life fails of illustration. It is an emphatic statement that he practised before he taught. "Jesus began to *do* and to teach," is the historic representation. This was not usual with his contemporaries. There had been talk enough, but something to be seen was wanted. "Who ever regarded his philosophy," says Cicero, "as a law and rule of life, and not rather as an ostentation of his ability and learning? Who ever obeyed his own instructions, and made his precepts the model of his own daily practice?" But Jesus always "lived out his word, and spake out his life."

He fulfilled the sublime maxim of Kant, "So act that your principle of action would bear to be made a law for the whole world."

We are aware that it is claimed that Jesus faltered in the garden, and betrayed weakness on the cross. And yet his whole life, aside from this occasion of his Passion, showed that he would have likewise triumphed heroically in those moments, had not his humanity been disturbed by relations to God's justice and human guilt, which have pressed in such manner upon the soul of no other mortal.

That Jesus should tremble, nay, be appalled, in those moments of agony, is in perfect harmony with

his humanity and his deity, also with the startling supposition upon which his mission rested. If he is a vicarious sacrifice, it were fitting that his head should bow, both in the garden and on the cross; if he were not such, then no longer is his life a model.

But aside from these supposed exceptions, his life presents a clear margin. He fulfilled, at every point, the severest conditions. Were the race called upon to contribute one who is able to answer all the demands of a faultless example, could it do anything except point to Jesus? All the qualifications which enter into human conceptions of a universal ideal embody themselves in him. No nation, no period, no degree of culture, no condition in life, however advanced through the grand steps of civilization, or the new and curious speculations in modern science, is without its example and model.*

To the medieval knights he was the model of chivalry; to the monk he was the "pattern of all ascetism;" and to Napoleon he was the grand man, "between Him and whomever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison." To Strauss Jesus was a wise Rabbi; to Schenkel, "the representative of political and theological progress;" to Renan, "a moral teacher;" and to Lequinia, the French atheist, he was a faultless pattern of virtue, wisdom, and patience.† To Fénelon he was "the

* For the accompanying citations we are largely indebted to F. W. Farrar.

† "He always displayed virtue; he always spoke according to the dictates of reason; he always preached up wisdom; he sincerely loved all men, and wished to do good, even to

most rapt of mystics;" to Vincent de Paul, "the most practical of philanthropists;" to Decker, "the first true gentleman that ever breathed;" to Müller, "the explanation of all history;" and to Emerson, the propounder of his own system of *personal pantheism.** To the Unitarian he is the unexceptionable, and greater than all.† What "splendid person-

his persecutors; he developed all the principles of moral equality, and of the purest patriotism; he met danger undismayed; he described the hard-heartedness of the rich; he attacked the pride of kings; he dared to resist even in the face of tyrants; he despised glory and fortune; he was sober; he solaced the indigent; he taught the unfortunate how to suffer; he sustained weakness; he fortified decay; he consoled misfortunes; he knew how to shed tears with those that wept; he taught men to subjugate their passions, to think, to reflect, to love one another, and to live happily together. He was hated by the powerful, whom he offended by his teaching, and persecuted by the wicked, whom he unmasked; and he died under the indignation of that blind and deceived multitude, for whose good he had always lived." — LEQUINIA.

* "Jesus Christ," says Emerson, "belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with an open eye the mystery of the soul. One man was true to what is in you and me. He said, in this jubilee of divine emotion, 'I am divine. Through me God acts; through me he speaks.'"

† "I have come down, let us suppose, to the Christian era," says an able representative, "and I open the Christian records. I know what has gone before. I have seen one era of progress opening upon another, and have observed that *noticeable order of things* by which, at the head of all these eras, have stood great and shining men to preside over them — Confucius, Menu, Zoroaster, Abraham, Moses, and Socrates. I know all these men; I have studied their life; I have studied their character; I have studied their words.

ality" must this be which is fitted to attract forever the human soul! which wears not out in one lifetime, nor in a world's time. He is, indeed, *Homo Hominum*, the man of men, the universal man, humanity's ideal. Is he not the *first* and *last?* *

Jesus is a Miracle Worker. Witness those miracles of absolute control, in which the sea became a pavement, and the tempest a child of obedience; those, also, of creative power, when he who had no storehouse, or grain-field, gave food to multitudes; and those miracles of healing the sick, and raising the dead, and raising himself — startling thought, *a person raising himself from the dead!*

Were not the elements of nature, and all things else, "in his hands plastic as wax"? Is he not, upon natural grounds, an incomprehensible, though incontrovertible fact?

"But how inevitably and how inexpressibly should I feel, on reading the life and teaching of Jesus, that here was a new thing in the world, — something far in advance of all that had appeared before! I am not anxious to separate this excellence from all other; I only say, that it is above all. Simply as an impartial student of history, and of human nature, I say, 'This is *greatest!* this is the greatest that has ever appeared among men.'"

* To these may be added the requirement of Plato: "To prove a man heartily righteous, he must be scourged, bound, have his two eyes put out, and in the close, having suffered all evils, must be crucified." How strikingly are these conditions fulfilled in the life of Jesus! And here was another condition of this same philosopher, equally well fulfilled: "with inspired lips speaking things simple, and unperfumed, and unadorned, which reaches over ten thousand years because of God." Also might be added Cicero's ideal description of a perfect ruler.

Is it longer occasion of wonder that his "very infancy not only startled a king, and made him fear for his throne, but also affrighted the powers of darkness, and silenced the heathen oracles"? Is it surprising, that his "childhood puzzled the knowledge of the aged, and confounded the doctors of the law"?

And should it trouble us when told that the Spirit of God, which brooded over the waters and infant earth, implanting in its bosom the seeds of that life and beauty which now gladden the eye with tree, leaf, and blossom, and which also inspires every divine thought in human hearts, begetting the divine life in the soul of every believer, likewise quickened the life of Christ as none other on earth has been quickened?

True, such an alliance of Jesus with God, as is here supposed, was an infinite compliment paid humanity; but was it not richly deserved? Apt the sentiment and conclusion of Roussel, "Like Father, like Son." Who can escape it? If he had inherited the grace and purity of a most perfect mother, and the divine truth and majestic bearing of God himself, would he have done differently? Would he have wrought mightier miracles, or established a grander spiritual kingdom?

Jesus is a Miracle. We call especial attention to but a single characteristic, yet one which is a test every way sufficient. We mean, his spotless, nay, his absolute purity.

That he possessed this there can be no question. "Sceptic after sceptic has glared into the character of Christ, searching for a flaw; and sceptic after sceptic has recoiled with the confession that, whatever Chris-

tianity might be, this Jesus of Nazareth was honest and pure. No character known to history has been subjected to scrutiny so piercing as that of Jesus Christ; and there is no character known to history, except his, of which moral perfection could for a moment be maintained."

To us this characteristic seems greater than the power to rise from the grave. The embodiment of moral beauty, — what is it, unless it be — God?

The purity of Jesus is not cold, distant, and negative, but positive, elevated, and grand. It is full of sympathy and simplicity, yet a simplicity which is stamped upon the very forehead of sublimity. How strange it is for one to live in this world who never felt personal guilt, or the need of pardon, and who never asked for it! There is nowhere in the records any indication of his repentance of a single word or thought. And yet never man lived who had such keen sense of the least dereliction in thought, word, and deed. "In the broad highway of history," it is certain we nowhere meet, in this respect, his like. "This is the one grand picture God has hung up in the centre of the world." He is, beyond all controversy, an exception to the universal experience of mankind. His is the only life that has been a compliment to God; and is his not the highest compliment God has yet received?

Was he, then, only a more exalted Plato, a more virtuous Socrates, a wiser Confucius; merely a philosopher among philosophers; only the most enlightened of teachers, the most patient of sufferers, and the most pure of moralists? He merely this? — he

who, alone among the millions of the race, stands forth by universal consent as the only pattern of absolute perfection, whose entire life, without inclining one hair's breadth to either side, pointed straight upward to heaven.*

Nay, more; is not he whose life was held up and held out to the world, and then after a brief space, by the will of God, was dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel, — but the shattered fragments of which, now that they are gathered into a brief history, contain power sufficient to change and purify the life of the whole world, power enough, even, to move nations and centuries together towards the universal and primeval Eden, whose broken body and bleeding wounds are sacredly commemorated in grateful remembrance of his dying request by all the civilized nations of the earth, — is not he all he claimed to be? and to claim for himself more than he did — how can that be possible?

Jesus is the Saviour. The sphere of miracle in which we find him so evidently enthroned, indicates abundant qualification for a work apparently of insuperable magnitude. A supernatural work, involving the regeneration and entire redemption of a human soul from sin and guilt, he can accomplish, because he can employ supernatural agencies.

It is eminently fitting, and perfectly natural, for him, when exigencies require it, to act supernaturally; it would be marvellously unnatural for him to do otherwise.

Nor is this all. He saves, not by his superhuman instructions merely, not by a faultless and exemplified

* Bayne.

theory chiefly, nor yet by working supernatural wonders before the eyes of men, but as we have seen by answering the strange, yet ultimate condition of universal and essential theology, which required *the shedding of his blood!*

By this act Jesus is a perfect response to the universal prayer of mankind, the manifest illumination of the shadows of all old dispensations, literally fulfilling their types, and realizing to the letter their repeated predictions. "The use of Jewish forms was not unworthy of Jesus; nay, the avoiding of them would have been affectation."* It was his passage through the world in this character of a vicarious victim, which announced that the temple and altars of Jerusalem, and the altars of the whole world, were no longer of service, and that all prophecies were henceforth closed, "like gates through which a king or conqueror has passed."

We do not here investigate definite theories and methods, but would fix attention upon the simple fact.

In doing this the wide field of testimony is already before us. Jesus continually assures the world that he saves others by dying himself. His solemn prediction is in the way of literal and complete fulfilment.†

The disciples, likewise, always, and without qualification, condition the world's redemption upon Christ's sacrificial atonement. And the confession of Christians, all history and countries through, is in such striking uniformity, that its report respecting this feature of Christ's work is overwhelming. And besides this Christian sentiment, there is also, down deep in the

* De Wette. † John xii. 32.

heart of universal humanity, a lingering conviction that about the cross and death of Jesus revolve, in some manner, all the vital interests and destinies of time and eternity.

Other agencies have been employed, the eyes of men have been often turned in different and opposite directions, yet from no other source has come to human hearts any substantial release or relief.

But whenever the man of sin and guilt, even if in deepest anguish, and well nigh despairing, whose misery is but increased by contemplating the requirements of that holy law, and that model and ideal life, — yes, when such an unfortunate despondent seeks the cross of Christ, and stands in tears and repentance under its shadow, — the truth then dawns upon him; the atonement enthrones itself in his heart, his soul is full, his eyes brim full, and abiding in this faith, he rejoices evermore, and adds to that of all others, perhaps in terms of tangled grammar and confused rhetoric, his own version of the beautiful story of the cross and its power to redeem.

It is thus that Christ breathes new life into human nature, and lifts up fallen men, making of them, "actually and truly, living images of God." No wonder that the world looked forward to his coming, and that all now look back to it, and that multitudes look fondly forward to his coming again. No wonder that he is the only one among all the world's great men, philosophers, sages, and reformers, to whom untold millions bend the knee, and whom they welcome as the Lord of Glory. No wonder that when he is presented to the rude inhabitants of any clime, they, too, answer back,

that God himself is in the midst of them. Verily, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." *

But are our problems yet solved? How is it possible that Jesus could have been such a teacher, surpassing all other teachers, such an example enthroning himself so completely in the realm of eternal ideals, such a miracle-worker, such an inscrutable miracle himself, and such an infinite Saviour as he is? and how is it possible that he could have responded so fully to the prayer of humanity as to be, by universal recognition, the "Concord of Ages," the "true Ecumenical," the Absolute Elect, the one towards whom turn our noblest impulses as naturally as the flower to the sun? nay, how could he have so completely thrilled human consciousness with such transforming and transcendent earnestness and ecstasy as are witnessed, instances without number, unless the Great and Eternal One had dwelt in him, even with all the undiminished grandeur of his perfections?

Does not the solution of the multiplied and involved difficulties rest alone with that sublime Christian faith which is able to write its confident inscription above this page of otherwise inexplicable world-problems, *He in whom we believe is both Jesus of Nazareth and Almighty God — the world's* GOD-MAN?

* Titus ii. 11–13.

APPENDIX.

411

APPENDIX.

A. (Page 58.)

A SENTENCE of St. Austin throws light upon this subject: —

"The ancient Romans worshipped I know not what god, whom they call Summanus, more than they did Jupiter. But after that a stately and magnificent temple was erected to Jupiter, they all betook themselves thither, insomuch that the name of Summanus, now not at all heard, is scarcely to be found in ancient writings."

No one can well take exception to Dr. Schaff's review of Greek and Roman polytheism. "Its polytheism rested on a dim monotheistic background, subjected all the gods to Jupiter, and Jupiter himself to a mysterious fate; it had at bottom the feeling of dependence on higher powers, and reverence for divine things; it preserved the memory of a golden age and of a fall; it had the voice of conscience, and a sense, obscure though it was, of guilt; it felt the need of reconciliation with Deity, and sought that reconciliation by prayer, penance, and sacrifice. Many of its religious traditions and usages were faint echoes of the primal religion; and its mythological dreams of the mingling of the gods with men, of Prometheus delivered by Hercules from his helpless sufferings, were unconscious prophecies and fleshly anticipations of Christian truths."

B. (Page 60.)

This is easily seen in the composition of Israelitish names not only with El, but also with Baal, such as Jerubbaal (adversary of Baal) (Gideon, Judges vi. 32, and elsewhere), Esbaal (1 Chron. viii. 33, ix. 39), Meribbaal (1 Chron. viii. 34. ix. 40), names which afterwards, on account of aversion to Baal, are changed into Jerubboseth (2 Sam. xi. 21), Isboseth (2 Sam. ii. 8, and elsewhere), and Mephiboseth (2 Sam. iv. 4, and elsewhere); as also the interchanging of El and Baal (Judges viii. 33, ix. 4. Comp. with ix. 46), of Baaljada (1 Chron. xiv. 7), and Eljada (1 Chron. iii. 8; 2 Sam. v. 16), Eljon El Schaddai, Adonai, even among the Israelites, to designate the Supreme Being. — *Washburn's Translation of Scholten.*

C. (Page 63.)

In reply to the claims often made by rationalists that Philo had much to do in moulding the mind of Jesus, and that he was perhaps his superior, we can do no better than quote De Pressensé: "A judgment may now be formed of the assertion so lightly thrown out, that Philo is the elder brother of Jesus and the inspirer of John. For my part, I know no contradictions in the history of human thought more flagrant than those which exist between the doctrines of these two. The first rests wholly upon the negation of moral evil; the starting-point of the second is the deep and bitter consciousness of sin. Alexandrine theosophy admits no redemption; the gospel is nothing without this article. Philo proclaims the impossibility of Deity uniting himself directly with the human creature, while the incarnation is the grand theme of St. John. The one sees in the Word only the abstract generalization of divine ideas; the other adores in Him 'the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father.' Philo's ultimatum is this: Deity cannot touch that which is material;

the fourth Gospel is summed up in this expression of its prologue: 'The Word became flesh.' The antithesis is absolute, for that which is with St. John a capital truth would be to the Jew of Alexandria appalling blasphemy. If, then, Christianity must, at all costs, be linked with an antecedent system, this precursor must be sought elsewhere than in the synagogues of Egypt."

D. (Page 68.)

We would not overlook formal devotions as practised by all Mohammedans, or the pious devotions of the few. "When I contrast," says Mr. Forster, "the silence of a Turkish mosque, at the hour of public prayer, with the noise and tumult so frequent in Christian temples, I stand astonished at the strange inversion in the two religions of the order of things which might naturally be expected." "I have seen," says another, "a congregation of at least two thousand souls assembled in the mosque of St. Sophia, with silence so profound, that, until I entered the body of the building, I was unaware that it contained a single worshipper."

Five times daily the muezzin proclaims the hour of prayer in these words: "There is no God but God; Mohammed is his prophet. Come to prayer." In the morning call this is added: "Prayer is better than sleep." Every Mussulman forthwith leaves his employment, and prostrates himself before the great Allah. But notwithstanding all this, those best acquainted with Moslems tell us that these prayers are, in most cases, mere forms. When Christians speak of talking with God, these worshippers are startled.

E. (Page 81.)

Prescott's account of this sacrificial offering is so graphic that we venture to introduce it: "A year before the intended sacrifice, a captive, distinguished for his personal beauty, and

without a blemish on his body, was selected to represent Tezatlipoca. Certain tutors took charge of him, and instructed him how to perform his new part with becoming dignity and grace. He was arrayed in a splendid dress, regaled with incense, and with a profusion of sweet flowers. When he went abroad he was attended by a train of royal pages; and, as he halted in the street to play some favorite melody, the crowd prostrated themselves before him, and did him homage as the representative of their good deity.

"In this way, he led a life of luxury till within a month of his sacrifice. . . . He was feasted at the banquets of the principal nobles, who paid him the divine honors of a divinity. At length the fatal day arrived. The term of his short-lived glories was at an end. He was stripped of his gaudy apparel, and bade adieu to the fair partners of his revelries. One of the royal barges transported him across the lake, to a temple which rose on its margin about a league from the city. Hither the inhabitants of the capital flocked to witness the consummation of the ceremony.

"As the sad procession wound up the sides of the pyramid, the unhappy victim threw away his gay chaplets of flowers, and broke in pieces the musical instruments with which he had solaced the hours of captivity.

"On the summit he was received by six priests, whose long and matted locks flowed disorderly over their sable robes, covered with hieroglyphic scrolls of mystic import. They led him to the sacrificial stone, a huge block of jasper, with its upper surface somewhat convex. On this the prisoner was stretched. Five priests secured his head and his limbs, while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, emblematic of his bloody office, dexterously opened the breast of the wretched victim with a sharp razor of itztli, — a volcanic substance, hard as flint, — and inserting his hand in the wound, tore out the palpitating heart. The minister of death, first holding this up towards the sun, — an object of worship throughout Anahuac, — cast it at the feet of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated, while the multitudes below prostrated themselves in humble adoration."

F. (Page 90.)

"The more I investigate ancient history," says Schlegel, "the more I am convinced that the civilized nations set out from a true worship of the Supreme Being."

In the Shoo-King, Chinese, is the following account of a prayer at once noble and availing: "At the end of three decades the people of Meaou continued rebellious against the emperor's commands, when Yih came to the help of Yu, saying, 'It is virtue which moves heaven;' there is no distance to which it does not reach. Pride brings loss, and humility receives increase; this is the way of heaven. In the early time of the emperor (Shun), when he was living by Mount Leih, he went into the fields, and daily cried with tears to compassionate heaven, and to his parents, taking to himself and bearing all guilt and evil. At the same time, with respectful service, he appeared before Koo-Sow, looking grave and awe-struck, till Koo also became truly transformed by his example. Entire sincerity moves spiritual beings; how much more will it move the prince of Meaou!"

One cannot fail, while reading this account of Shun, to be reminded of the wrestling prayer of Jacob, and of the parables of the importunate widow, and friend at midnight.

The following hymn from the Rig Veda is in the highest sense devotional, and, as Müller remarks, with the change of a single word, "Varuna," might, with perfect propriety, be introduced into our Christian Liturgy: —

"Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the winds, have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone to the right shore; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, almighty, have mercy!"

Turning from Brahminism to Buddhism, we find, as already hinted, that Buddha to the Buddhist was not in every case a mere abstraction, but often a veritable prayer-hearer.

"There is," says Huc, the traveller, "a very touching custom at Lhassa. In the evening, just before sundown, all the people leave their work, and meet in groups in the public streets and squares. All kneel and begin to chant their prayers in a low and musical tone.

"The concert of song which rises from all these numerous reunions produces an immense and solemn harmony, which deeply impresses the mind. We could not help sadly comparing this pagan city, where all the people prayed together, with our European cities, where men would blush to be seen making the sign of the cross."

G. (Page 153.)

Herbert Spencer states this matter so clearly and sensibly, that we venture an extended quotation.

"We too often forget that not only is there 'a soul of goodness in things evil,' but very generally, also, a soul of truth in things erroneous. While many admit the abstract probability that a falsity has usually a nucleus of reality, few bear this abstract probability in mind when passing judgment on the opinions of others. A belief that is finally proved to be grossly at variance with fact is cast aside with indignation or contempt; and in the heat of antagonism scarcely any one inquires what there was in this belief which commended it to men's minds. Yet there must have been something. And there is reason to suspect that this something was its correspondence with certain of their experiences; an extremely limited or vague correspondence, perhaps, but still a corre-

spondence. Even the absurdest report may in nearly every instance be traced to an actual occurrence; and had there been no such actual occurrence, this preposterous misrepresentation of it would never have existed. Though the distorted or magnified image transmitted to us through the refracting medium of rumor is utterly unlike the reality, yet in the absence of the reality there would have been no distorted or magnified image.

"And thus it is with human beliefs in general. Entirely wrong as they appear, the implication is, that they germinated out of actual experience — originally contained, and perhaps still contain, some small amount of verity. More especially may we safely assume this in the case of beliefs that have long existed, and are widely diffused; and most of all so in the case of beliefs that are perennial, and nearly or quite universal. The presumption that any current opinion is not wholly false, gains in strength according to the number of its adherents.

"Admitting, as we must, that life is impossible unless through a certain agreement between internal convictions and external circumstances, — admitting, therefore, that the probabilities are always in favor of the truth, or at least the partial truth, of a conviction, — we must admit that the convictions entertained by many minds in common are the most likely to have some foundation. The elimination of individual errors of thought must give to the resulting judgment a certain additional value. It may indeed be urged that many widely-spread beliefs are received on authority, that those entertaining them make no attempts at verification, and hence it may be inferred that the multitude of adherents adds but little to the probability of a belief. But this is not true. For a belief which gains extensive reception without critical examination is thereby proved to have a general congruity with the various other beliefs of those who receive it; and in so far as these various other beliefs are based upon personal observation and judgment, they give an indirect warrant to one with which they harmonize."

H. (Page 168.)

Mr. Parker's picture of the ruling family of Rome is so vivid, that we cannot forbear quoting.

"At Rome, eighteen centuries ago this very year (1853), Nero was married to a maiden called Octavia. He was the son of Ahenobarbus and Agrippina; the son of a father so abandoned and a mother so profligate that when congratulated by his friends on the birth of his first child, and that child a son, the father said, 'What is born of such a father as I, and such a mother as my wife, can only be for the ruin of the state.' Octavia was yet worse born. She was the daughter of Claudius and Messalina. Claudius was the Emperor of Rome, stupid by nature, licentious and drunken by long habit, and infamous for cruelty in that age never surpassed for its oppressiveness, before or since. Messalina, his third wife, was a monster of wickedness, who had every vice that can disgrace the human kind, except avarice and hypocrisy: her boundless prodigality saved her from avarice, and her matchless impudence kept her clean from hypocrisy. Too incontinent, even, of money to hoard it, she was so careless of the opinions of others that she made no secret of any vice.

"Her name is still the catchword for the most loathsome acts that can be conceived of. She was put to death for attempting to destroy her husband's life; he was drunk when he signed the warrant, and when he heard that his wife had been assassinated at his command, he went to drinking again.

"Agrippina, the mother of Nero, and the bitterest enemy of Messalina, took her place in a short time, and became the fourth wife of her uncle Claudius, who succeeded to the last and deceased husband of Agrippina only as he succeeded to the first Roman king — a whole commonwealth of predecessors intervening. Octavia, aged eleven, was already espoused to another, who took his life when his bride's father married the mother of Nero, well knowing the fate that awaited him. Claudius, repudiating his own son, adopted

Nero as his child and imperial heir. In less than two years, Agrippina poisoned her husband, and by a *coup d'état* put Nero on the throne, who, ere long, procured the murder of his own mother, Seneca, the philosopher, helping him in the plot; but in due time to fall by the hand of the tyrant."

I. (Page 172.)

Certain portions of this Eclogue betray noticeable familiarity with the prophecies of Isaiah, Micah, and other Messianic Hebrew prophets. Virgil's acquaintance with these writings is easy of explanation if we call to mind that the Jews with whom he must have been acquainted at the time lived in great numbers in one quarter of Rome. The following translation by Edwin Higginson will be of interest to the reader: —

"Sicilian Muses, let us sing of somewhat greater themes;
Groves and lowly shrubs are not to every one's taste:
If we sing of sylvan themes, let them be such as are worthy
of a consul's ear.
Now is come the final age of the Cumæan prophecy.
The great round of time begins afresh.
Now the Virgin (Astræa) returns; the kingdom of Saturn
returns;
Now a new race is sent down from heaven above.
Only be thou propitious to the child at his birth,
With whom first the iron age shall end, and the golden arise
on the whole world;
O chaste Lucina, be propitious; already thine Apollo reigns.
Thus, in thy consulship, yes, thine, the glorious age shall
come in,
Pollio, and the majestic months shall begin their march.
Under thy guidance, any remaining traces of our wickedness

Shall be cancelled, and leave the earth free from its constant dread.
He shall be endowed with the life of the gods, and shall see
Heroes mixed with gods, and shall himself be seen by them,
And with his ancestral worth shall rule a peaceful world.
But to thee, O boy, the earth without culture shall pour forth as its first offerings.
Ivy branches wandering abroad, mixed with spikenard,
And the Egyptian bean mixed with the smiling acanthus,
The she-goats of their own accord shall bring home their milk-distended teats.
Nor shall the herds of cattle fear the mighty lions.
The cradle shall spontaneously pour out sweet flowers upon thee.
The serpent shall die out; the deceitful poisonous herb shall cease;
The Assyrian amomum shall be of common growth.
But, so soon as thou shalt be able to read the praises of heroes and the deeds of thy father,
And to know what virtue and valor mean,
The plain shall gradually grow yellow with soft ears of corn,
And the ruddy grape shall hang upon the wild brambles,
And the hard oak distil honey-like dew-drops.
Yet a few traces of our ancient iniquity will lurk,
Impelling men to tempt the sea in ships, and to wall their cities,
And to plough the ground with furrows.
There will be a second Tiphys and another Argo
To carry chosen heroes; there will still be new wars;
And again shall a mighty Achilles be sent to Troy.
After that, when confirmed life shall have made thee a man,
The mariner himself shall give up seafaring; nor shall ships
Exchange traffic; each land shall produce everything.
The ground shall not submit to the rake, nor the vine to the pruning-hook,

And the stout ploughman shall loose the yoke from the bulls.
Nor shall the wool be taught to assume artificial colors,
But the rams shall naturally vary their fleeces in the meadows,
Now with sweetly blushing purple, now with saffron yellow;
The sandyx shall clothe with its own hue the lambs that feed upon it.
"Run on, O ages such as these," the Fates,
Immutable in their firm will, have said to their revolving spindles.
O thou dear offspring of the gods, Jove's great descendant,
Accept thy mighty honors! the time will soon come!
See the world tottering with its convex weight;
See its lands, and the ocean's tracts, and heaven profound;
See how all things rejoice in the age about to come!
O, may the latter part of my life hold on so long,
And my breath suffice to speak thy deeds!
Nor the Thracian Orpheus shall surpass me in song,
Nor Linus; though his mother help the one, his father the other,
Calliope her Orpheus, the handsome Apollo his Linus.
Though Pan were to contend with me, and Arcadia to be judge,
Even Pan should confess himself surpassed, and Arcadia assent.
Begin, little boy, to recognize thy mother by her smile;
To that mother ten months have brought long weariness.
Begin, little boy; him whom his parents smile not on,
No god thinks worthy of his board, nor goddess of her couch."

J. (Page 184.)

In not a few instances doubters have been cured of their scepticism by their own explorations and investigations. Instances illustrating this statement may be found in Fleming's Christology.

The following illustration by the author of Mythical Theories of Christianity shows how the discovery of a single incident overcomes a difficulty otherwise well nigh insuperable. It is also an illustration of a class of evidence in favor of the historical truthfulness of the evangelists which is yearly accumulating.

"We all remember the account of the murder of John the Baptist. It is told with all those minute and delicate touches which are the peculiar indication of autoptic testimony. It places before our eyes the great feast — the young lady dancing her lascivious dance — the words of Herod's vow — the girl's going out with excitement to her mother — the demand of the Baptist's head in a large dish — the sorrow and reluctant consent of Herod — the mission of the executioner — the presentation of the head to the girl, and by her to her mother. Everything betokens the presence of an eye-witness.

"The narrative is open to this obvious objection: How could the disciples of Christ, mean and low as they were, procure so accurate a description of an event which happened in the palace at the great feast? There were neither newspapers nor reporters in those days. But this is only the beginning of the difficulty. The authors of the Gospels profess to give us the exact words which were uttered by Herod, in the retirement of his palace, when the reports brought him of the fame of Jesus rendered him conscience-stricken. The words are most remarkable, and leave no alternative between their being the words of Herod or a forgery. 'It is John,' says he, 'whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.' Our version spoils the force of

the last words, which, rendered literally, are, 'The powers energize in him.' This is certainly a most singular expression, and one open to a strong suspicion of forgery; for how could the followers of Jesus have got hold of the very words of an utterance of Herod spoken in the retirement of the palace?

"But besides all this, these words plainly imply that it was the general idea that a large number of miracles had been wrought by our Lord. My opponents suppose that the historic Jesus only attempted to work miracles in a very few questionable cases, and that the multitude of miracles which have been subsequently ascribed to him are the inventions of his deluded followers. Such are the difficulties. Now for their solution.

"It has been observed that the author of the Acts of the Apostles tells us that among the teachers of the church at Antioch, during Paul's sojourn there, was Manaen, who was a foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch. This is told us in a manner which is purely incidental, and supplies us with a possible source from whence the information might have been derived. Still it by no means follows that a man who had the same wet-nurse as Herod was an inmate of his palace, or witnessed the great feast.

"But a passage of the most incidental character in St. Luke's Gospel supplies us with the source of information which we want. In narrating our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem, Luke tells us that he was accompanied by the twelve apostles, and several women who ministered to him. Of these he designates three by name. One of these is described as Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward.

"Here, then, we have the very person we are in want of. Chuza's office of steward imposed on him the duty of superintending the great feast. He therefore witnessed the whole procedure, and his wife was in constant communication with the disciples. His office must have brought him into daily communication with his master. What more likely than, when he waited on Herod for his orders, he would ask him the news, and that he should report to him the fame of the

great Teacher with whom his wife was in attendance? He was therefore in the exact situation to have heard Herod's conscience-stricken exclamation. The source of information is before us. The incidental mention of Joanna and her husband affords to this narrative an attestation such as few events in past history possess."

The following instances, fully developed by Farrar, belong to the same class of evidence: Sergius, the proconsul of Cyprus, was thought to have held the position of proprætor until Luke's statement was verified by the discovery of coins.

Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene, was ridiculed as a clumsy invention, until Renan even had the candor to admit that the inscription of Zenodorus at Baalbek is strong evidence that the evangelist was right.

And so of the taxing in the time of Cyrenius lately investigated by Zumpt.

We do not remember to have seen the numerous, dissimilar, and independent evidences of Gospel credibility stated more clearly and forcibly than by Davison: —

"If man's contrivance, or if the favor of accident, could have given to Christianity any of its apparent testimonies, either its miracles or its prophecies, its morals or its propagation, or, if I may so speak, its Founder, there would be no reason to believe, or even to imagine, that all these appearances of great credibility could be united together by any such causes. If a successful craft could have contrived its public miracles, or so much as the pretence of them, it required another reach of craft and new resources to provide and adapt its prophecies to the same object. Further, it demands, not only a different art, but a totally opposite character, to conceive and propagate its admirable morals. Again, the achievement of its propagation, in defiance of the powers and terrors of the world, implied a new energy of personal genius, and other qualities of action, than any occurring in the work before. Lastly, the model of the life

of its Founder, in the very description of it, is a work of so much originality and wisdom as could be the offspring only of consummate powers of invention. But the hypothesis sinks under its incredibility. For each of these suppositions of contrivance being arbitrary, as it certainly is, and unsupported, the climax of them is an extravagance. And if the imbecility of Art is foiled in the hypothesis, the combinations of Accident are too vain to be thought of."

Racine draws out a single point in this class of internal evidence very forcibly.

"How admirable and beautiful is the simplicity of the evangelists! They never speak injuriously of the enemies of Jesus Christ, of his judges, nor of his executioners. They report the facts without a single reflection. They comment neither on their Master's mildness when he was smitten, nor on his constancy in the hour of his ignominious death, which they thus describe: 'And they crucified Jesus.'"

K. (Page 202.)

Parker's confession affords a good sample. "The words of Christianity," he says, "have come down to us from the lips of that Hebrew youth, gentle and beautiful as the light of a star, not spent by their journey through time and through space. They have built up a new civilization, which the wisest Gentile never hoped for, which the most pious Hebrew never foretold. Through centuries of wasting, these words have flown on, like a dove in the storm, and now wait to descend on hearts pure and earnest, as the Father's Spirit, we are told, came down on his lowly Son. The old heaven and the old earth are indeed passed away, but the Word stands. Nothing shows clearer than this how fleeting is what man calls great, how lasting what God pronounces true. Christ says his words shall never pass away. Yet at first sight nothing seems more fleeting than a word. It is an

evanescent impulse of the most fickle element. It leaves no track where it went through the air. Yet to this, and this only, did Jesus intrust the truth wherewith he came laden to the earth — truth for the salvation of the world. He took no pains to perpetuate his thoughts; they were poured forth where occasion found him an audience, by the side of the lake or a well, in a cottage or the temple, in a fisher's boat or the synagogue of the Jews. He founds no institution as a monument of his words. He appoints no order of men to preserve his bright and glad revelations. He only bids his friends give freely the truth they had freely received. He did not even write his words in a book. With a noble confidence, the result of his abiding faith, he scattered them broadcast on the world, leaving the seed to its own vitality. He knew that what is of God cannot fail, for God keeps his own. He sowed his seed in the heart, and left it there, to be watered and warmed by the dew and the sun which heaven sends. He felt his words were for eternity. So he trusted them to the uncertain air; and for eighteen hundred years that faithful element has held them good — distinct as when first warm from his lips. Now they are translated into every human speech, and murmured in all earth's thousand tongues, from the pine forests of the north to the palm groves of eastern Ind. They mingle, as it were, with the roar of a populous city, and join the chime of the desert sea. Of a Sabbath morn they are repeated from church to church, from isle to isle, and land to land, till their music goes round the world. These words have become the breath of the good, the hope of the wise, the joy of the pious, and that for many millions of hearts. They are the prayers of our churches, our better devotion by fireside and fieldside, the enchantment of our hearts. It is these words that still work wonders, to which the first recorded miracles were nothing in grandeur and utility. It is these which build our temples and beautify our homes. They raise our thoughts of sublimity, they purify our ideal of purity, they hallow our prayer for truth and love. They make beauteous and divine the life which plain men lead. They give wings to our aspirations.

What charmers they are! Sorrow is lulled at their bidding. They take the sting out of disease, and rob adversity of his power to disappoint. They give health and wings to the pious soul, broken-hearted and shipwrecked in his voyage through life, and encourage him to tempt the perilous way once more. They make all things ours — Christ our brother, Time our servant, Death our ally and the witness of our triumph. They reveal to us the presence of God, which else we might not have seen so clearly, in the first wind-flower of spring, in the falling of a sparrow, in the distress of a nation, in the sorrow or the rapture of the world. Silence the voice of Christianity, and the world is well nigh dumb, for gone is that sweet music which kept in awe the rulers of the people, which cheers the poor widow in her lonely toil, and comes like light through the windows of morning, to men who sit stooping and feeble, with failing eyes and a hungering heart. It is gone — all gone! only the cold, bleak world left before them."

L. (Page 219.)

"An assertion of unlimited miraculous power is so difficult to substantiate," says Farrar, "that, apart from Christianity, I scarcely know a single instance in which it has been put forward. Prophets of the most splendid reputation did not claim them. St. John the Baptist, intensely and powerfully as he swayed the inmost hearts of his nation, was never accredited with them. Founders of great religions, — Confucius, Sakya Mouni, Zoroaster, Mohammed, — even in obscure ages, even amid barbarous surroundings, made no pretence to them. If, in a few instances, Christian saints have professed to be endowed with them, it has been only in virtue of Christ's power; not even in *their* legends do they occur in contemporaneous evidence, or in any but instances of a dubious kind.

"Yet Christ, surrounded as he was by the 'immense pub-

licity' of furious Jews, and haughty Romans, and sneering Greeks, not only claimed them, but his claim was undisputed by his deadliest enemies. Neither the Pharisees, nor the multitudes, nor Caiaphas, nor Herod, nor Celsus, nor Porphyry, nor Hierocles, nor Julian, dreamed of denying that He had wrought deeds apparently supernatural; and it is an insult to the understanding to compare the evidence on which they rest either with the vulgar travesty of a miracle alleged to have been wrought by a coarse soldier before the rabble of Alexandria, or with the posthumous plagiarisms in the heavy romance of the sophist Philostratus."

M. (Page 220.)

The account of the first interview between Jesus and his disciples is thus happily stated by Ruskin: —

"I suppose there is no event in the life of Christ to which, in hours of doubt or fear, men turn with more anxious thirst to know the close facts of it, or with more earnest and passionate dwelling upon every syllable of its recorded narrative, than Christ's showing himself to his disciples at the Lake of Galilee. There is something pre-eminently open, natural, full fronting our disbelief, in this manifestation. The others, recorded after the resurrection, were sudden, phantom-like, occurring to men in profound sorrow and wearied agitation of heart; not, it might seem, safe judges of what they saw. But the agitation was now over. They had gone back to their daily work, thinking still their business lay net-wards, unmeshed from the literal rope and drag. 'Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.' True words enough, and having far echo beyond those Galilean hills. That night they caught nothing; but when the morning came, in the clear light of it, behold, a figure stood on the shore. They were not thinking of anything but their fruitless hauls.

They had no guess who it was. It asked them simply if they had caught anything. They said, No. And it tells them to cast yet again. And John shades his eyes from the morning sun with his hands, to look who it is, and though the glinting of the sea, too, dazzles him, he makes out who it is at last; and poor Simon, not to be outrun this time, tightens his fisher's coat about him, and dashes in, over the nets. One would have liked to see him swim those hundred yards, and stagger to his knees on the beach.

"Well, the others get to the beach, too, in time, in such slow way as men in general do get, in this world, to its true shore, much impeded by that wonderful 'dragging the net with fishes;' but they get there, seven of them in all, — first the denier, and then the slowest believer, and then the quickest believer, and then the two throne-seekers, and two more, we know not who. They sit down on the shore, face to face with him, and eat their broiled fish, as he bids. And then to Peter, all dripping still, shivering, and amazed, staring at Christ in the sun, on the other side of the coal fire, thinking a little, perhaps, of what happened by another coal fire, when it was colder, and having had no word once changed with him by his Master since that look of his, — to him, so amazed, comes the question, 'Simon, lovest thou me?' Try to feel that a little, and think of it till it is true to you."

N. (Page 223.)

The attitude of the disciples in this respect is well stated by Dr. Lindsay, in the Encyclopædia Britannica: —

"The apostles invariably represent the *humanity* of Christ as being in itself a marvellous thing. The simple fact that he should have been a man; that he should have been born; that he should have had a woman for his mother; that he should have grown in wisdom and stature; that he should have lived in circumstances of poverty and toil; that he

should have been persecuted; and that he should have died, though admitted as facts, are all, in the judgment of his followers, so many marvels, at which they cannot sufficiently wonder. With them it is not his divine nature and perfections that are the objects of admiration; it is his humanity at which they stand in amaze. Is this to be accounted for otherwise than on the supposition that they esteemed him in original and proper nature as divine, and that what filled them with wonder was that he, the divine, should condescend to become man?"

Francis Newman is correct when saying that "it is doubtful whether the other apostles dwelt at all more on the human personality of Jesus than Paul did, which is scarcely at all."

O. (Page 227.)

It is singular that, though others have given descriptions of the personal appearance of Jesus, the disciples have not in any way, or to any extent, alluded to the subject.

The following is a correct translation of an epistle sent by Publius Lentulus to the Roman senate: —

"There appeared, in these days, a man of great virtue, named Jesus Christ, who is yet among us; of the Gentiles accepted for a prophet of truth; but his disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and cureth all manner of disease. A man of stature somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as the beholder must both love and fear. His hair the color of a chestnut full ripe, plain to the ears, whence, downward, it is more orient, curling, and waving about his shoulders. In the midst of his forehead is a stream or partition of his hair, after the manner of the Nazarites; forehead plain and very delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, beautiful, with a lovely red; his nose and mouth so forked as nothing can be represented; his beard thick, in color like his hair; not over long; his

look innocent and mature; his eyes gray, quick, and clear. In reproving he is terrible, in admonishing courteous and fair-spoken; pleasant in conversation, mixed with gravity. It cannot be remembered that any have seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. In proportion of body, most excellent; his hands and arms delectable to behold; in speaking, very temperate, modest, and wise; a man of singular beauty, surpassing the children of men."

All absence of relics and descriptions of personal appearance, so far as the apostles are concerned, accords with the feelings of the devout believer. He would have it thus, rather than otherwise. His tendency is to emphasize the deity of Jesus, and scarcely to recognize his humanity.

The healthfulness of this condition of Christian feeling is well stated by Ruskin, while condemning the Catholic reverential use of paintings: —

"But I nevertheless believe that he who trusts much to such helps will find them fail him at his need, and that the dependence, in any great degree, on the presence or power of a picture, indicates a wonderfully feeble sense of the presence and power of God. I do not think that any man, who is thoroughly certain that Christ is in the room, will care what sort of pictures of Christ he has on its walls; and, in the plurality of cases, the delight taken in art of this kind is, in reality, nothing more than a form of graceful indulgence of those sensibilities which the habits of a disciplined life restrain in other directions. Such art is, in a word, the opera and drama of a monk. Sometimes it is worse than this, and the love of it is the mask under which a general thirst for morbid excitement will pass itself for religion.

"The young lady who rises in the middle of the day, jaded by her last night's ball, and utterly incapable of any simple or wholesome religious exercise, can still gaze into the dark eyes of the Madonna di San Sisto, or dream over the whiteness of an ivory crucifix, and returns to the course of her daily life in full persuasion that her morning's feverishness has atoned for her evening's folly. And all the while, the art

which possesses these very doubtful advantages is acting for undoubtful detriment, in the various ways above examined, on the inmost fastnesses of faith; it is throwing subtle endearments round foolish traditions, confusing sweet fancies with sound doctrines, obscuring real events with unlikely semblances, and enforcing false assertions with pleasant circumstantiality, until, to the usual, and assuredly sufficient, difficulties standing in the way of belief, its votaries have added a habit of sentimentally changing what they know to be true, and of dearly loving what they confess to be false."

P. (Page 271.)

In this list of those who wrote against the Christians appears Trypho the Jew, whom Eusebius calls the most distinguished of the Hebrews. He ridiculed those Jews who became Christians, upon the ground that "those who have a better God should not worship Jesus of the Gentiles."

Lucian was another opponent. His works, *Peregrinus* and *Philopseudes*, show him to have been the "type of atheistic selfishness." He made Christianity the butt of his ridicule, and, in doing so, continually misrepresented it. It is uncertain whether, from the narrow-minded and morbid views of certain believers, he misapprehended the essential character of Christianity, or whether he blindly closed his eyes to the real excellences of the system. It is worthy of remark, however, that he spoke of Christ as "that great man who was crucified in Palestine."

Celsus, who is well known to all our readers, also employed the weapons of his witty and acute intellect in all manner of attacks. At times he displayed even vehement passion against everything called Christian. It is sufficient proof of his blindness and prejudice to say that he acknowledged not a single redeeming quality in Christ, in Christianity, or in any Christian he ever knew.

Porphyry was, in some respects, quite the reverse of Celsus. By nature he had a nobler spirit, and was in possession of profound intellectual attainments. Yet he disclosed in no respect a Christian spirit. On the contrary, he adroitly availed himself of every point in the Christian faith which presented an object of attack. He was always careful, however, never to calumniate Jesus, but recognized him as a "pious soul," though he expressed pity for those who worship him as God.

Hierocles, president of Bithynia, was the last of those authors against Christianity who flourished prior to Constantine. In a kind of mockery, Hierocles styled himself a friend of Christians, but invented all manner of falsehoods respecting the history of Christ. He charged the apostles with being "jugglers" and "liars." He was the Renan of his times, without Renan's politeness.

We may add to this list Julian, the last of all the early heathen infidels who at all signalized themselves by their assaults upon Christianity. His monkish education led him to think unfavorably of the Christian system, and to prefer instead the heathenism of Rome. His persecutions, though bloodless, were characterized by all manner of oppressions. His importance is now acknowledged as of the smallest account, and none deny that for ten years of his life he was a most consummate dissembler and hypocrite. He introduced his work against the Christians as follows: "I think it right for me to show to all men the reasons by which I have been convinced that the religion of the Galileans is a human contrivance, badly put together, having in it nothing divine; but by abusing the childish, irrational part of the soul, which delights in fable, they have introduced a heap of wonderful works to give it the appearance of truth."

And yet he acknowledged the true date of the Gospel history, and objected to some things Jesus did not do, "who," he confessed, "rebuked the winds, and walked on the sea, and cast out demons."

With the death of Julian all open opposition to the faith of the Gospel ceased for nearly a thousand years.

Q. (Page 271.)

While upon this much contested ground, it becomes necessary in the body of the book, or in notes or appendix, to introduce a biographical development. We have chosen the latter place, and have made the treatment as brief as possible.

The first person in the church having any considerable authority and influence, who denied the deity of Christ, was Artemon (190 A. D.). His supporters were Theodotus and Paul of Samosata. These theologians, while attempting to explain the various phenomena presented, held that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he was perfectly free from sin, and that on these accounts there was ample ground for human redemption and faith.

Praxeas (200 A. D.), the next dissenter of note, was a contemporary of Tertullian, and as stoutly contended for the pre-eminence of Christ as did this eminent apologist. He held that the term "son" did not designate "the *divine* nature which dwelt in the Redeemer, but the human nature which was united with the divine." He held that the Son was flesh, man, Jesus, — the Father was Spirit, God, Christ. He no more questioned the essential and supreme deity of Christ than does the soundest orthodox believer to-day. The principal charge brought against Praxias by Tertullian was, that he manifested extreme partiality for the divine unity — a Jewish tendency. Praxias did logically claim a *unifold* nature, and Tertullian, upon the same ground and with equal error, contended for a twofold nature in the divine being.

A little later (220 A. D.) appeared Noetus of Smyrna. His aim seems to have been to avoid in his doctrinal statements all appearance of polytheism, or even tritheism, into both of which he thought some of the church fathers and teachers were drifting. He taught that the divine nature in the begotten man was the unbegotten God; that the Godhead of Christ and of the Father were one and the same. In this he was opposed by Tertullian, and pronounced a heretic, though philosophically and theologically he was, in

some respects, upon as sound footing as the father who anathematized him.

Beryl (230 A. D.), bishop of Bostria, was another noted dissenter. He was a man of extensive learning and of unquestioned piety. His theory was a development of the view held by Noetus. In brief, it was, that Christ did not exist as a distinct person before his incarnation, and that the Godhead in Christ prior to incarnation was such as could exist in one undivided being; consequently, that Christ before incarnation was perfect Logos, but not perfect Son. Beryl at these points was zealously opposed by Origen, whose great influence and superior intellect did much, no doubt, to silence the so-called heretic. But Schleiermacher thinks Beryl's views have a decided advantage. "We are disposed to think," he says, "that Beryl, when he had a conference with Origen at Bostria, ought rather to have converted him, than he to have converted Beryl."

The theories of Noetus and Beryl paved the way for Sabellianism. Sabellius, the acknowledged representative of this theory, was one of the most original and profound thinkers of his time. He is represented by Theodoret as holding that the same being as Father gives laws, as Son becomes incarnate, as Spirit is conversant with us. According to his creed there existed in the ages of eternity one God-substance, absolute, solitary, and inactive. At the beginning of time it occurred to this substance to create; but in order to do this, he found it necessary to assume two other characters — Logos and Spirit. By the Logos he created man after his own image, by the Holy Spirit he filled man with wisdom. In a limited manner these characters, hardly distinct personalities, continued to act through the ages prior to the Christian era. Then the Logos became incarnate, and the Spirit began to act with greater facility upon hearts. But at the end of the Christian dispensation the Father will put off these two personalities, which were assumed characteristics, and will thenceforth appear as eternal and absolute God, original God-substance. Sabellius allowed the use of the term Son in connection with Logos prophetically only,

actually only when applied to Jesus of Nazareth. He was one of the first to employ (perhaps Paul of Samosata preceded him) the word *homousios* — of the same substance; he employed it in an exact sense, so exact as to lead for a time to its rejection.

Sabellius was followed by Arius, born a century later. He is represented as a man of extensive learning. He was eloquent, zealous in all good works, and maintained a high reputation for purity and sanctity. He does not seem to have courted controversy, and had no thought of opposing the received and authorized views of the earlier Christian bishops and teachers. He plainly states that he only desired "to preserve fully and truly the doctrine for a long time held by the clergy at Alexandria;" in later times leading Arians frequently appealed to the views of Dionysius in support of their own.

The question between Arius and his bishop which introduced the subsequent controversies, as in all other instances within the pale of the church, grew out of an attempt to define, dogmatically or scientifically, the relations sustained by the different personalities in the Trinity.

The logical tendencies and outcome of all these various "modifications" is thought, by most orthodox writers, to have reached their extreme in Socinianism, several centuries later.

Lælius Socinus, after whom the system is named, was born 1525. He maintained that Jesus Christ was a mere man, and that his divinity consisted simply in his divine commission and the superior honor which was conferred upon him.

R. (Page 340.)

We have advanced to such a point in these observations that a definition of Christian and Christianity, upon the basis of this spiritual consciousness, may be justly required.

The term *Christian*, as now frequently employed by radi-

cals, even in a somewhat limited sense, designates any one at all religiously inclined, whether believing in Christ or not. Christianity, in such case, is little other than Rabbinism or Buddhism; indeed, we see in this view no difficulty in endowing the unchristenized California Chinese with Christianity. But in these times of *settlements* and *establishments* it is necessary to take into account, when defining, the essence as well as the surface of things. Certainly we cannot overlook significations which have been recognized for eighteen centuries.

The following are some of the definitions and descriptions of Christian and Christianity which have been given by eminent men: —

"That man," says Niebuhr, "who does not hold Christ's earthly life, with all its miracles, to be as properly and really historical as any event in history, and who does not receive all points of the apostolic creed with the fullest conviction, I do not conceive to be a Protestant Christian. And as for that Christianity which is such according to the fashion of the modern philosophers and pantheists, without a personal God, without immortality, without an individuality of man, without historical faith, it may be a very ingenious and subtle philosophy, but it is no Christianity at all."

Says Schleiermacher, "Everything in Christianity has relation to that system of redemption which was accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth. By this test Christianity is distinguished from all other religions; it alone is the religion of the cross and redemption."

"However the characteristic features of Christianity may be designated, however the Christian tenets may be questioned or denied," says Luthardt, "this is the last and the deciding thing that marks the Christian, — that he bows the knee in the name of Jesus Christ. He who discards this may still call himself a Christian: we cannot in truth recognize him as such. He may be a religious man; may perhaps be, in his way, a pious man. There have been, and yet are, pious heathen, even; but a Christian, in the proper sense of the word, he is not."

"I understand by Christianity," says Disselhoff, "a religion *positively* biblical."

"If morality is the chief business of the preacher," says Herder, "and the Bible and the words of Jesus are mere quotations which come from God just as all truth comes from him, then farewell Christianity, religion, revelation. The names become polite masks, and that is about all."

"Resting confidently in the belief that Jesus is a teacher come from God," says Dr. Eliot, "we stand upon what may be called distinctively Christian ground. Not that we mean to deny the Christian name to those who reject the supernatural element in revelation; but it is evident that there is a broad distinction here, which we are compelled to recognize. However excellent the Christian system may be, so long as it fails in the claim to divine authority, Christianity can be no more to us than the best among the 'philosophies' of the world. If all stand upon the same level of authority, we select one or other of them, according to our best judgment. The sole authority, after all, would be in our own minds. But when we have once admitted that Jesus came from God, that he was inspired by the Divine Spirit to reveal the truth and the will of God, that 'he spake with authority,' and not as the philosophers and scribes, — we are removed from the school of speculation to that of discipleship."

"In fine, to reject these miracles," says Dr. Peabody, "is to reject the Gospels as credible narratives, and, if we still call ourselves Christians, to be Christians in no sense known to human language or history — to be disciples of a Christ solely of our own fabrication; therefore our own disciples, not another's."

There is truth in each of these views, but perhaps not the whole truth. A Christian, it is true, is one whose outward and inward life corresponds with the accepted faith of Christendom; is one who believes in a personal God and immortality, in a biblical religion, in Jesus as a teacher sent from God, and in the Gospel narratives as credible; all this is correct.

But more than this, as it appears to us, is necessary. For one to be a Christian, in a sense answering vital conditions,

he must be in possession of that Christian consciousness which enables the heart accurately to define religious matters, though the head may report poorly, and which appropriates to itself the God-man and all other things pertaining thereto, and which, when it blossoms out in its fulness, is Christianity in *perfection*.

S. (Page 347.)

St. Victor Hugo, 1100 A. D., shows very clearly how different symbolization and a different measure of knowledge, without impairing the unity of faith, might exist among Christians. "How many there are," he says, "among Christian people, even at the present time, who firmly believe in a future world and an eternal life, and fervently long after it, but are still very far from being able to form the remotest conception of what it consists in! In like manner, before the appearance of Christ, there were many that firmly believed on the Almighty God, who promised them salvation, and that hoped for salvation from him, and through this faith and this hope, actually obtained salvation, although they ever remained in ignorance respecting the time, the way, and the order in which the promised salvation would be accomplished. The very apostles themselves found it extremely difficult to understand how the sufferings of Christ were necessary to man's salvation; and therefore it was, that what Christ said to them on this subject continued for so long a time to be obscured to them.

"Accordingly, it is the same fundamental article of faith, virtually including in it all the rest, on the embracing of which salvation has ever depended. The matter of this faith was ever the same; it became more clearly and fully unfolded, but it never changed. Before the law, faith was exercised in God as Creator, and salvation was expected from him; but through whom, and in what way, this salvation was to be

brought about, was unknown to believers, if we except a few to whom it was made known by a special gift of illumination. Under the law, the Saviour was already promised as a person; but whether this person was to be a man, an angel, or God, was not yet revealed. Faith in God, as Creator and Redeemer, is the common ground of faith for all periods in the evolution of the kingdom of God, connected with which there may exist different measures of knowledge in different periods, and among different classes of men in the same period; still, the simple and the enlightened are bound together by the same faith."

T. (Page 365.)

Testimony as to the early spread of Christianity is abundant and reliable. Tacitus, though calling Christians "detestable criminals," speaks thus: "The author of that sect was Christus, who had been executed in Tiberius' time by the procurator Pontius Pilate. This pestilential superstition checked, for a while, burst out again, not only through Judea, the first seat of the evil, but even through Rome, the centre both of influence and outbreak of all that is atrocious and disgraceful from every quarter. First were arrested those who made no secret of their sect, and by this clew a *vast* multitude of others also."

Pliny, the friend of Trajan and Tacitus, was sent to rule Bithynia. He was perplexed at the devotion and numbers of Christians. He told the emperor that he could not compel a real Christian to repeat an incantation to the gods of Rome. He confessed himself nonplussed, "especially for the numbers who are implicated." Thus, almost before the death of St. John, Christianity had spread into Asia well nigh to the suppression of paganism.

Justin Martyr says, "There is not a race of men, barbarian or Greek, nay, of those who live in wagons, or who are

nomads, or shepherds in tents, among whom prayers and eucharists are not offered to the Father and Maker of the universe, through the name of the crucified Jesus."

Clement says, "The word of our Master did not remain in Judea as philosophy remained in Greece, but has been poured out over the whole world, persuading Greeks and barbarians alike, race by race, village by village, every city, whole houses, and hearers one by one; nay, not a few of the philosophers themselves."

Says Origen, "In all Greece, and in all barbarian races within our world, there are tens of thousands who have left their national laws and customary gods for the law of Moses and the word of Jesus Christ; and considering how in so few years, in spite of the attacks made on us, to the loss of life or property, and with no great stores of teachers, the preaching of that word has found its way into every part of the world, so that Greek and barbarian, wise and unwise, adhere to the religion of Jesus, doubtless it is a work greater than any work of man."

U. (Page 369.)

We would not leave the impression that nothing has been accomplished among pagan nations. The condition of things is not so depressing for the cause of truth as is sometimes represented. India is now accessible to the missionaries of every church. Christian schools and chapels are everywhere multiplying. Thousands of these Hindoos have been converted, and tens of thousands instructed in Christianity. The cruelties of heathenism are lessened. No government longer rigidly supports idolatry. All the islands in the Eastern Archipelago are accessible to missionaries. Ceylon, Madagascar, and other islands of note, where the voice of Christianity had not been heard at the beginning of this century, possess to-day flourishing Christian congregations and schools, also noble and indomitable native Christian labor-

ers. The gospel is spreading among the teeming millions of China. The whole coast of Africa is girded with bands of light. The degraded Bushman, and the low Hottentot, and the warlike Kaffir, are kneeling at the cross of Christ. The whole Pacific world has witnessed the marvellous triumps of the gospel. Four hundred thousand ignorant and savage barbarians inhabiting the beautiful Pacific islands, where the name of Christ had not been heard at the beginning of this century, are to-day rejoicing in the spiritual blessings imparted by personal faith in the doctrines of Christianity. At the beginning of this century, "to desert the Crescent for the Cross was death in all Mohammedan countries. But to-day, all Mohammedan countries are listening to the voice of Christianity." Such have been the direct conquests of Christianity and of providence working in its favor during the past seventy years. Certainly, as Dr. John Newman (Catholic) says, "Christianity has had a grand history, and has effected great things, and is as vigorous in its age as in its youth."

The steady historic progress of Christianity since its founding is such as to be far from disheartening. Sharon Turner gives a tabular statement somewhat conjectural, but it is certainly no very improbable representation of the progressive increase of Christians in the world: —

First century,	500,000
Second century,	2,000,000
Third century,	5,000,000
Fourth century,	10,000,000
Fifth century,	15,000,000
Sixth century,	20,000,000
Seventh century,	24,000,000
Eighth century,	30,000,000
Ninth century,	40,000,000
Tenth century,	50,000,000
Eleventh century,	70,000,000
Twelfth century,	80,000,000
Thirteenth century,	75,000,000

Fourteenth century, . . .	80,000,000
Fifteenth century, ...	100,000,000
Sixteenth century, . . .	125,000,000
Seventeenth century, . . .	155,000,000
Eighteenth century, . . .	200,000,000

"Although this is a mere approximation," says Dr. Haven, referring to this table of estimates, "and a very loose one, to the actual facts, yet it is interesting and instructive. With the exception of the thirteenth century (*tenebrosum*, as the late Dr. Miller called it), the progress of the truth has been ever onward. From every defeat it has arisen afresh, and — what has never been the case in any other system, religious, social, or intellectual — has revived anew from the ashes of its own inward corruptions. In this nineteenth century, the Christian population of the world cannot be far from three hundred millions; and its progress now is more rapid than in any period since the apostolic age."

V. (Page 381.)

Some of the fundamental distinctions which separate Christianity from all other religions are well stated by C. E. Luthardt, of Leipsic.

"No religion but the Christian has disclosed the innermost nature of God; none but this has laid bare, in its peculiar centre-point, the moral nature of man. Christianity alone has taught that God is holy love; it alone has uncovered the full guilt of sin. No other religion knows of a grace of pardon and of a history of this grace, and has taught that herein is to be found the source of moral life. None condemns man so fully, and yet exalts him so high, shows so much the depth of his misery, and at the same time the height of his calling, and opens the way to attain it. No other religion is, therefore, in the proper sense, one of redemption and regeneration.

"All others go no farther than the surface. They have accomplished changes in individual parts and sides of the outward social life; but an actual renewal in the innermost foundations, the gospel alone has been able to effect. Hence all other religions have their day. And when the period of decline has dawned upon them, they are unable from their own strength to renew themselves. Buddhism undertook to breathe new life into the stiffened Brahminical heathenism, and now spiritual desolation and moral death rest more heavily and insurmountably down upon it than upon the idolatry of the Brahmins. The gospel, on the contrary, is an inexhaustible fountain. It constantly refreshes itself from itself, and so sends forth a renewing moral energy. The Christian church has had times of the deepest decline, times of the utmost degeneracy. But from every prostration it has risen again. In it lives an eternal youth."

A popular American writer shows in the following felicitous figure that Christianity, amid all the external progress of modern times, has remained essentially unchanged.

"We confess to sore corruptions in certain quarters; yet it is true that the Christian world, as such, in its creeds and actual belief, still maintains the whole gist of the original Christianity. There is not a main timber in the great ship, as it was launched, which is not in it to-day, and as sound as ever. On parts barnacles have been allowed to gather. At times men have hindered the sailing and the safety by various outlandish equipments. At times they have made our trireme fantastic with ill-judged paint, and even odious with unfit lading.

"But, despite this, it is the same ship, as to those great skeleton beams whose heart of oak holds all together, that once ploughed the blue waves of Galilee and the Ægean, with the fishermen apostles for crew and undoubted Jesus for Master."

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